A... Iqbal

ABOUT IQBAL

and

HIS THOUGHT

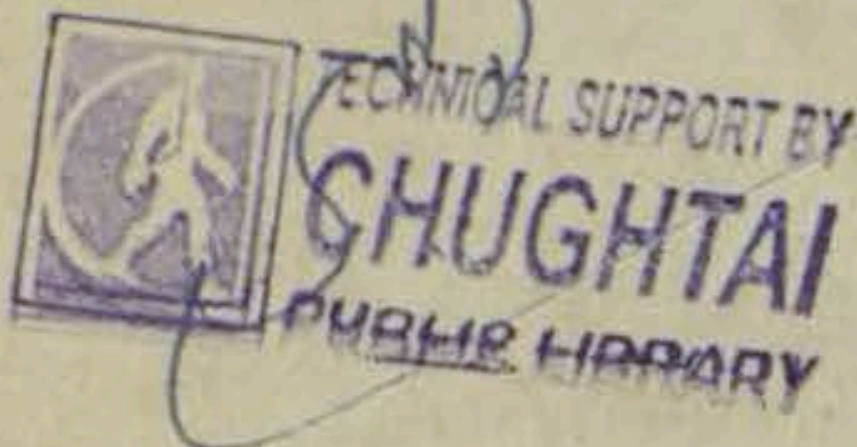
COLLECTED PAPERS—I

About Iqbal and His Thought

M. M. SHARIF

Director, Institute of Islamic Culture
President, Pakistan Philosophical Congress
Formerly, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University
Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of the Panjab
General President, Indian Philosophical Congress, Etc.

★

INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE
CLUB ROAD, LAHORE

Preface

ORIGINALY it was not my intention to publish my collected papers during my lifetime, but the feeling caused by my last illness that I may not be spared long to pursue my studies to my heart's content, has induced me to gather whatever little work I have so far done. The present collection is the first instalment of this undertaking. If I write anything more on Iqbal that will be added to it in its second edition. Paper 2 has been included in this collection by the kind permission of the Editor of *Islamic Culture* and the first two papers by that of the Editorial Board of the quarterly journal *Iqbal*. I owe my gratitude to both. Paper 3 consists of a partly finished letter to Mr. Sinha. Before it could be completed and delivered to him, he had passed away.

20 February 1964 *M.M. Sharif*

Contents

One

My Contacts with Iqbal

MY early contacts with Iqbal were contacts from a distance, that is to say, contacts not directly with him but with his poetry. I was a student of seventh class in my village school when I began taking interest in Iqbal's poetry. I collected all the previous issues of the *Makhzan* in which his poems used to appear and copied out all the poems up-to-date. This process went on throughout the period preceding the publication of *Bang-i Dara*. My collection included even those poems which were not allowed to form a part of that work.

Up to 1910 I attended all the sessions of the Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam chiefly with the object of listening to Iqbal whose beautiful voice was in perfect tune with the sublime poems which he sang in these annual gatherings. When Iqbal sang, it seemed as if his whole soul gathered in a mystic ecstasy and flowed out in heavenly melodies that enraptured every listener and carried him from his immediate surroundings into the domain of intense emotion.

In 1909 I was a student of the Model School of

Lahore, and lived with some relatives in a portion of Mirza Jalaluddin's *haveli* situated on the Railway Road. My room was next to the Mirza's drawing-room with a perpetually locked door between the two. This drawing-room was the weekly rendezvous of the Mirza's most intimate friends, of whom I could identify by their voices Chaudhri Shihabuddin, Iqbal, and my own cousin, Mian Shahnawaz. Sometimes I could hear a feminine voice bursting out in laughter or song. What made me thankful for this quite a disturbing neighbourhood was the fact that I could occasionally hear Iqbal's poems recited or beautifully sung by himself or some professional singer.

From 1910 to 1914 I was a student of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh. Round about 1912 Hasrat was the favourite poet of Aligarh, and that for two reasons: first, because he was an old boy of the College, and, second, because the War of Tripoly had made Aligarh students anti-European, and Hasrat being already in jail undergoing rigorous imprisonment for his anti-imperialistic activities had become their ideal. Being a purist, Hasrat was bitterly critical of Iqbal's language as a poet. Although Akbar Allahabadi had silenced Hasrat by giving a verdict in favour of Iqbal and Iqbal had already achieved fame as one of the foremost poets of India, he was more or less ignored at Aligarh. I was a devotee of Iqbal, and my rapturous

singing (if singing it could be called) of his verses in my ecstatic moods in the verandahs and the courtyard of Syed Mahmood Court began to draw my fellow residents' attention to him. It was in 1913 that my collection started circulating among the more serious type of students and, before I left for England for studies in 1914, Iqbal had been recognised at Aligarh, as elsewhere, as the greatest poet of Muslim India.

It was during this period that I wrote two letters to Iqbal, requesting him to explain, if I remember correctly, the following two couplets, one from the poem entitled "Payam-i 'Ishq" (the Message of Love) and the other from "Husn-o Zawal":

سن اے طلبگار درد پہلو میں ناز ہوں تو نیاز ہو جا
میں غزنوی سومنات دل کا ہوں تو سراپا ایاز ہو جا
ملا جواب کہ تصویر خانہ ہے دنیا شب دراز عدم کا فسانہ ہے دنیا

My inquiry was based on my doubts about correspondence between the actual relation between Ghaznavi and Ayaz and the relation shown in the first couplet, and the appropriateness of Iqbal's description of the world in the second. Iqbal wrote back a long letter explaining these lines to me. Just mark the humility and modesty of the greatest poet of the land, sending long explanations to a chit of a College boy about his stupid inquiries, and ending those explanations by such phrases as "I have tried to express these ideas, but I do not

know how far I have succeeded."

I came in personal contact with Iqbal on my return from England. I met him by chance at the wedding of Qazi Fazl-i Haq, Professor, Government College, Lahore. When I was introduced to him by the bridegroom as a student of Philosophy just returned from Cambridge, Iqbal seemed to be very pleased, for after him I was the first Indian Muslim who had studied Philosophy abroad. His deep love for Philosophy made him take interest in me. The memories of his own Cambridge days came to his mind and we talked throughout the marriage feast about our common teachers, McTaggart, James Ward and others.

I met Iqbal again in the company of my friend Said Hasan who, like Iqbal, was then a practising lawyer in the Lahore Chief Court, predecessor of the present High Court. The conversation here turned on the *amours* of somebody not known to me. Iqbal described them with a little gusto without an iota of reserve or prudery. He was too frank and honest to have any false sense of proprieties. A few days after that, I went to Iqbal with Mirza Sultan Ahmad, the philosopher son of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, who was older than both of us. On a suggestion from the Mirza, Iqbal took up pen and ink and in our presence wrote a letter to Mr. (afterwards Sir) Ross Masood, who was then Director of Public Instruction in

Hyderabad Deccan, recommending me to him for a post in the Osmania University. In response to this recommendation Mr. Ross Masood sent me an offer through Iqbal within a fortnight; but simultaneously with that I was offered Professorship (Grade II) of the Government College, Lahore, by the Punjab Government, and Senior Professorship of Philosophy by the authorities of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh. Of these posts the last was evidently the most attractive, but offer of the first having come as a result of Iqbal's recommendation, I thought it best to take his advice before coming to a decision. It would have been most ungrateful of me if I had not done so. He discussed with me the pros and cons of each alternative and finally advised me to accept the Aligarh post. Thus with his blessing I accepted that post. This was my personal experience of his large-hearted sympathies with his fellow-men.

For many years, after this meeting, I went to Iqbal to pay my respects to him on the occasions of my visits to Lahore which, to my great regret, used to be few and far between. Each time I visited him I was deeply impressed by his cheerfulness, frankness, social courtesy, intellectual integrity and simplicity of life.

Iqbal was not fond of exercise, least of all walking. One day I saw him walking on Fane Road which was quite a distance from his house.

On my expressing surprise, he told me that an Italian gentleman had come to see him and he was returning after seeing him back to the place where he was staying and that he had had a long talk with him on the Fascist movement. I thought it was his own vitalism and curiosity about a new vitalistic movement which energised him to do such an unusual thing as taking a walk on the pavement of a crowded road.

I saw Iqbal in Aligarh on three occasions each of which left an indelible impression on my mind. The second time I saw him in Aligarh was when he came there to deliver his *Six Lectures*. It was then that I received the deepest impression of his profundity as a thinker. My first chance of seeing him in Aligarh was some time after the publication of *Rumuz-i Bekhudi*. It was in a party held on the Swimming Bath Grounds of the University, where we were sitting next to each other.

He told me that he was planning to write a Mathnawi in which he would synthesise *Khudi* and *Bekhudi*. It is a great pity that this plan did not materialise. In my readings of *Asrar-i Khudi* and *Rumuz-i Bekhudi*, I felt that at one or two places, which I cannot now recall, I came across some contradictory ideas. I availed myself of the opportunity of taking up these topics with him. He tenderly smiled and observed: "My dear Sharif, *Asrar* and *Rumuz* are poetic works and not books on Philoso-

phy." I did not pursue the subject further, but I am perfectly certain that his large-heartedness would not have allowed him to stop me if I did pursue it. Although I have always felt, and there are not a few who have felt like me, that these poems are more philosophical than poetical, yet there is no doubt that a poet in so far as he is a poet is always carried away by the moods of the moment and it is, therefore, wrong to expect cold logic from a poetico-philosophical work of a poet-philosopher.

My last contact with Iqbal was when he came to Aligarh to receive his honorary Doctorate. I met him in a tea-party given by Khwaja Ghulamus Sayyidain at his house to which about half a dozen Professors of the University were invited. It was a very small group. During the conversation our hearts were deeply touched by Iqbal's account of an unforgettable incident in his life. It happened when Nadir Khan passed through India on his way to Kabul where he was destined to overthrow Bachcha-i Saqa's rule and win the crown of Afghanistan. From Bombay he had wired to Iqbal that he was passing through Lahore on such and such a date by such and such a train. Iqbal greatly admired Nadir Khan's valour and was of the view that he alone could save his unfortunate country from ruin. Nadir Khan was travelling alone without any friend or follower. When his train arrived Iqbal was at the station. After

exchange of curtseys and ideas, Iqbal took out of his pocket a bundle of currency notes worth ten thousand rupees and offered it to Nadir Khan as his humble contribution to the noble and hazardous venture on which he had embarked. We were touched to the core of our hearts when it unwittingly slipped out of his lips that this amount consisted of all of his life's savings—in fact all his worldly possessions save clothes, books and furniture. How many of us would be prepared to make a sacrifice like this for the sake of a foreign land! Their conversation at the railway station was marked by Iqbal's insistence on Nadir's acceptance of the help, and Nadir's resistance to it, till Nadir evolved a compromise formula by which Iqbal was to keep the money and, if and when Nadir needed it, he would send for it. It was never sent for.

I now close my account of the few glimpses I had into Iqbal's personality in my occasional contacts with him. What depth of insight into his mind must have been gained by those writers who had the privilege of sitting in his company for years!

Two

Iqbal's Conception of God

IQBAL[1] is a philosopher and poet. It is not easy to decide whether he is a poet-philosopher or a philosopher-poet. We have more poetical writings[2] of his than purely philosophical ones, and while much of his poetry is highly finished, of his philosophical works, which are only two, one[3] is mainly historical and the other[4] is scholastic in conception and, though exhibiting complete unity of thought, lacks unity of treatment. These facts might lead one to think that he is first a poet and then a philosopher.

But this may not be a correct estimate of Iqbal. In him philosophy and poetry seem to be indis-

---

1. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, M.A., PH.D. (1873-1938), one of the two renowned philosophical poets of modern India, the other being Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

2. The following are Iqbal's poetical works:—i. *Bang-i Dara* (The Caravan Bell); ii. *Asrar-i Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self), translated into English by R. A. Nicholson; iii. *Rumuz-i Bekhudi* (The Mysteries of Selflessness); iv. *Payam-i Mashriq* (The Message of the East); v. *Bal-i Jibril* (The Wing of Gabriel); vi. *Zabur-i Ajam* (The Testament of Iran); vii. *Javed Nama* (The Book Abiding); viii. *Armughan-i Hijaz* (The Gift of Hijaz); ix. *Musafir* (The Traveller); x. *Pas Chih Bayad Kard* (What then Must be Done?).

3. *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Luzac & Co., 1908.

4. *Six Lectures*, 1930: revised ed. under the new title *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, O.U.P., 1934.

solubly blended as they have never been before in any great thinker—not even in Dante. His poetry and philosophy are both great. Perhaps his poetry is so because of his philosophy and his philosophy because of his poetry. In the development of his mind neither element lagged behind: there was a balance or rather a blend of both throughout.

This article, however, has nothing to do with Iqbal's poetry. Its scope is definitely confined to his philosophy, and in this only to his conception of God. Iqbal's philosophy, and equally his idea of God, passes through three periods. From the nature of the case it is impossible to draw a clear line between these periods. Nevertheless, each period, taken as a whole, bears a few features by which it is definitely distinguishable from the remaining two.

In the first period, which extends from 1901 to about 1908, Iqbal conceives of God as Eternal Beauty, existing in independence of, and prior to, particulars and yet being revealed in them all. He reveals Himself in the heavens above and the earth below, in the sun and the moon, in the rise of the stars and the fall of dew, in land and sea, in fire and flame, in stones and trees, in birds and beasts, in scents and songs; but nowhere does He reveal Himself more than in the eyes of Salima, even as for Dante. He is revealed nowhere more than in the eyes of Beatrice. Just as iron filings are attracted by a magnet, so also are all things attracted by God.

Thus God as Eternal Beauty brings into existence all movements of things. Force in physical objects, growth in plants, instinct in beasts, and will in man are mere forms of this attraction, this love for God. Eternal Beauty is, therefore, the source, the essence and the ideal of everything. God is universal and all-inclusive like the ocean, and the individual is like a drop. Again, God is like the sun and the individual is like a candle, and the candle ceases to burn in the presence of the sun. Like a bubble or a spark, life is transitory—nay, the whole of existence is transitory.[1]

This in brief is Iqbal's conception of God in the first period of his thought. It does not seem difficult to trace its source. It is fundamentally Platonic. For Plato also regards God as Eternal Beauty, as a universal nature which is prior to particulars and is manifested in them all as form. He also regards Him as an ideal to which we are all moving, and he also divorces love from sex implications, giving it a universal import. This Platonic conception, as interpreted by Plotinus, adopted by the early Muslim scholastics and adapted to pantheism by the pantheistic mystics, came down to Iqbal as a long tradition in Persian and Urdu poetry, and was supplemented by his study of the English romantic poets. In his first idea of God, there-

1. *Bang-i Dara* (The Caravan Bell), pp. 73, 84, 107, 117, 118, 122, 127, 128, 191.

fore, he cannot be considered to have been very original. He is simply conveying to us in beautiful words what he has received as a heritage of history. Nevertheless, he uses this idea of the Godhead as material for his poems in a hundred and one novel ways. By 1908 he was already recognised as one of the foremost poets of India, and his creative genius had already given to the world some immortal verse.

The second period of Iqbal's mental development may be dated from about 1908 to 1920. The key to the understanding of this period is Iqbal's change of attitude towards the distinction he draws between beauty as revealed in things, on the one hand, and the love of beauty, on the other. To begin with, as we have noted, he regards beauty as eternal and as the efficient and final cause of all love, all desire and all movement. But in the second period there is a change in this position. First a doubt and then a kind of pessimism have crept into his mind about the eternity of beauty and its efficient and final causality. *Jalwa-i Husn*, *Haqiqat-i Husn*, *Shabnam aur Sitare* and the second part of the first verse of *Sitara* give expression to this attitude. Side by side with it there is now a growing conviction of the eternity of love, desire, pursuit or movement.

From 1905 to 1908 Iqbal studied under McTaggart and James Ward at Cambridge. During the

same period he made a deep study of Rumi[1] in connection with his Cambridge thesis. The influence of McTaggart and James Ward on Iqbal failed to make itself felt till after his return from England: while he was there, he remained a pantheistic mystic. This is corroborated by McTaggart in his letter to Iqbal on the publication of Nicholson's English translation of his *Asrar-i Khudi*. "Have you not changed your position very much?" inquires McTaggart, and adds: "Surely, in the days when we used to talk philosophy together, you were much more a pantheist and mystic?" The fact that this remark of McTaggart's has been quoted by Iqbal himself in one of his articles[2] without any challenge, proves that he regarded it as true of his position. In about 1908, however, Iqbal began to appreciate McTaggart's conception of personal immortality. He also began to see an identity between the theistic pluralism of Ward and the metaphysical position of Rumi, and soon became a theistic pluralist himself. A little later Rumi was adopted by him as his spiritual leader. It seems, however, that Rumi was adopted by Iqbal as a spiritual leader not only because he was a kindred spirit,

---

1. Jalaluddin Rumi, the well-known Iranian philosophical poet of the thirteenth century. His chief work, the *Mathnawi*, is translated into English by R. A. Nicholson.

2. Iqbal, "McTaggart's Philosophy," *Journal of the East India Society*, reprinted in *Truth*, Lahore, July 1937.

speaking the same tongue[1] and sharing with him a mystic philosophy, a poetic genius, an intense religious temper, a firm belief in God, and a deep love of the Arabian Prophet. These merits could perhaps be found also in others. Iqbal took Rumi as his life-long guide because, and perhaps chiefly because, Rumi anticipates some of the fundamental ideas of his two new finds—Nietzsche and Bergson.

Though Iqbal had a working knowledge of German and could read German authors in the original, the translation of Nietzsche's entire works into English between 1907 and 1911 made these works even more accessible to him. Between 1910 and 1915, Bergson's books were translated into English by Wildon Carr, Slosson, Hulme, Mitchell, Pogson, Paul and Palmer; and Iqbal, who did not know French, had access to these also.

Now he discovered that, besides Rumi's affinity with Ward, there is also affinity between him on the one side and Nietzsche and Bergson on the other. Rumi, like Nietzsche, believes in evolution, in the freedom, possibilities and eternity of the self, in the destruction of the old for the construction of the new. And, like Bergson, he believes in movement as the essence of reality, and in intuition as the source of knowledge. This vitalistic position was reinforced

---

1. Much of Iqbal's poetry is written in Persian.

in Iqbal's mind by the influence of McDougall's *Social Psychology* and *Outlines of Psychology*, published in 1908 and 1910 respectively. In these works life is identified with Bergson's *elan vital* and the sentiment of self-regard is regarded as the core of human personality. All these ideas form the keynotes of Iqbal's philosophy in the second period.

Thus, under the leadership of an old oriental philosopher and with the aid of several modern European thinkers, Iqbal began to develop his own philosophy, which, in view of its most prominent feature during this second period of his thought, may be called the philosophy of the self.

It is in the light of this philosophy that one must understand Iqbal's ever-increasing emphasis on the efficiency and eternity of will and his ever-decreasing belief in the efficiency and eternity of beauty—a change in his attitude which takes him far away from Platonism and pantheistic mysticism.

Iqbal formulates his new philosophy in the later poems of *Bang-i Dara*, in *Asrar-i Khudi* and in *Rumuz-i Bekhudi*. His thought is now guided by the concept of the self, which is regarded as a dynamic centre of desires, pursuits, aspirations, efforts, resolves, power and action. The self does not exist in time, but time is dynamism of the self. It is action and, like a sword, carves its way through all difficulties, obstacles or hindrances. Time as action is life, and life is self; therefore time, life, and self

are all three compared to a sword.

The so-called external world with all its sensuous wealth, including serial time and space, and the so-called world of feelings, ideas and ideals, are both creations of the self. Following Fichte and Ward, Iqbal tells us that the self posits from itself the not-self for its own perfection. The sensible world is the self's own creation. All the beauties of Nature are, therefore, the creatures of our own wills. Desires create them, not they desires.

God, the ultimate reality, is the Absolute Self, the Supreme Ego. He is no longer to be conceived as Eternal Beauty—as block reality. Plato and poets like Hafiz who hold such a view are all to be condemned. God is now regarded as Eternal Will, and beauty is reduced to the position of an attribute of His, an attribute which covers now both the aesthetic value and the moral value. Instead of God's beauty, His unity is now emphasised. Belief in unity is shown to have high pragmatic value, for it gives unity of purpose and strength to individuals, nations, and mankind as a whole; enhances power; creates ever-increasing desires, hopes and aspirations; and removes all cowardice and all fear of the other-than-God.

God reflects Himself, not in the sensible world, but in the finite self, and for that reason approach to Him is possible only through the self. Search after

God is, therefore, conditional upon a search after one's self. Again, God is not to be sought by begging and beseeching, for that shows weakness and helplessness. Nearness to God must be consistent with the dignity of the self. Man should seek Him by the strength of his own will. He should rather capture Him in much the same way as a hunter captures his game. But God is anxious Himself to be captured, being as much in search of man as man is in search of Him. Having found God, one is not to allow oneself to be absorbed in Him and be thus annihilated. On the other hand, one should absorb God within oneself—absorb as much of His attributes as one possibly can, and there is no limit to this possibility. By absorbing God within itself the ego grows. When it grows into a super-ego, it rises to the rank of the vicegerency of God.

Such in brief is Iqbal's conception of God at this second period of his thought.

The third period of Iqbal's mental development extends from about 1920 to the date of his death. If the second period be regarded as a period of growth, this should be taken as a period of maturity. Iqbal has already accepted the influences which his genius has allowed him to accept. He has collected the elements of his synthesis and now elaborates them into an all-round system. This he does in eight works which were brought out in rapid succession between 1923 and 1938. His philosophy in this

period may be aptly described as the philosophy of change. The idea of Reality as self is still prominent, but that of change is more so.

Since the scope of this paper is confined to Iqbal's conception of God, all other aspects of his system are ignored, and a brief account is now given of his views about God in their final form.

God is "Reality as a whole," and Reality as a whole is essentially spiritual—spiritual in the sense of being an individual and an ego. He is to be regarded as an ego, because, like the human self, He is "an organising principle of unity, a synthesis which holds together and focalises the dispensing dispositions of His living organism for a constructive purpose." He is an ego also because He responds to our reflection and our prayer; for "the real test of a self is whether it responds to the call of another self."[1] Strictly speaking, He is not an ego, but the Absolute Ego. He is absolute because He is all-inclusive and there is nothing outside Him.

The Absolute Ego is not static like the universe as conceived by Aristotle. He is a creative spirit, a dynamic will or living energy, and, since there is nothing besides Him to put a limit to Him, He is an absolutely free creative spirit. He is also infinite. But He is not infinite in the spatial sense,

---

1. Iqbal, "McTaggart's Philosophy," *Journal of the East India Society*, reprinted in *Truth*, Lahore, July 1937.

for spatial infinites are not absolute. His infinity is intensive, not extensive, and consists in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity. His being a free living energy with infinite creative possibilities means that He is omnipotent.

The Ultimate Ego is then an omnipotent energy, a free becoming, a creative movement. It may be said that to think of movement which is not the movement of some objects is impossible. To this Iqbal's answer is that things can be derived from movement, but movement cannot be derived from immobile things, that movement is original, static things are derivative, and that they become static because they are derived from movement by finite thought working with static concepts. And he finds enough support for his view in modern physics, which reduces all physical things to merec entres of energy.

If then the Ultimate Ego is an all-inclusive movement, is He not constantly changing? No, and yes. No, because, according to Iqbal, change cannot be predicated of Him in the sense in which it is predicated of us, as a serial change—a succession from situation to situation, determined by our pursuits within the limitations of a nature surrounded by obstructing environment. Yes, because change is an attribute of His in another sense.

In our case serial change implies want, limitation, imperfection. The Absolute Ego is the whole

of Reality. He is not surrounded by an alien universe. Therefore, change as a movement from one imperfect state to a relatively more perfect state, or *vice versa*, is inapplicable to Him. The conception of serial time does not apply to Him. He is a continuous creation, and therefore changes only in the sense in which a continuous creation or continuous flow of energy can be said to change. But change as continuous creation does not imply imperfection. We should not repeat the mistake of Aristotle and Ibn Hazm[1] and conceive perfection as a final stage of completion. Such a stage must be characterised by inaction. To think of the Ultimate Ego as perfect in this sense is to make Him "an utterly inactive, motiveless and stagnant neutrality—an absolute nothing." A perfect individuality means to Iqbal, as to Bergson, an organic whole of which no detached part can live separately. The Ultimate Ego is perfect in this sense but not only in this sense. His perfection also implies "the infinite scope of his creative vision." His "not-yet," therefore, means the infinite creative possibilities of his being. He is perfect then as an unfailing being which retains its all-inclusive wholeness throughout, and the vision of which has infinite creative possibilities.

From the perfection of the Absolute Ego's indi-

---

1. A Spanish Muslim philosopher of the eleventh century.

viduality it follows that there is no reproduction in Him, for reproduction is building up a new organism—a duplication—out of a detached fragment of the old. He, as a perfect ego, as absolutely unique, cannot be conceived as procreating His own equals and "harbouring His rivals at home." He, therefore, has no progeny.

If God or the Absolute Ego or the whole of Reality is a freely, infinitely and perfectly creative, all-powerful movement, are we to say, with Browning, that he is also all-good, or, with Schopenhauer, that He is all-evil? "The issue," says Iqbal, "cannot be finally decided at the present stage of our knowledge of the Universe." The fact of moral and physical evil stands out prominent in the life of nature. But evil arises from the conflict of opposing individuals, and is therefore relative to finite beings. Again, "good and evil, though opposites, must fall under the same whole." "But here," we are told, "we pass the boundaries of pure thought and can see our way only by faith in the eventual triumph of goodness."

The Absolute Ego is also omniscient, but His knowledge is not, like the knowledge of a finite being, discursive—always moving round a veritable "other." Since there is no other for Him, His knowledge cannot be considered to be having the same perspective as human knowledge.

Nor is it right to think with Jalaluddin

Dawwani,[1] 'Iraqi,[2] and Royce that the knowledge of the Absolute Ego is a single indivisible act of perception, grasping the entire sweep of history, regarded as a sequence of events. This would be attributing to Him a kind of passive omniscience—a mere awareness of an already finished structure. His knowledge is not like a mirror reflection of His all-inclusive being. If it be regarded as a mirror reflection of a preordained order of events, then no scope is left for initiative, novelty and free creativeness. We must, therefore, conceive of His knowledge as a perfectly self-conscious, living, creative activity—an activity in which knowing and creating are one. Unfortunately, we possess no words to express the kind of knowledge which is also at the same time creative of its own object. His activity is at once the knowing and the creating of the object of knowledge.

Bergson is wrong in taking Reality as a mere free creative vitality of the nature of will, in regarding it as split into plurality of things by thought, and thus in creating a dualism of thought and will. He is right in holding that intellect is a spatialising activity of the finite self. But it is not only that. Thought is also a feature of the life of the Ultimate

---

1. A Muslim thinker of the sixteenth century; author of the celebrated work *Akhlaq-i Jalali*.

2. Fakhruddin Ibrahim of Hamadan better known by his poetical *nom de guerre* of 'Iraqi, a poet, mystic and philosopher of thirteenth century, pupil of Muhiyyuddin ibn al-'Arabi and author of *Lam'at* (Flashes).

Ego. He is not pure will. He is a *conscious* organic growth—a *consciously* free becoming, a creative movement in which thought and being are really one. His thought and being are one, the future itself is nothing but the open possibilities of creation.

This discussion leads us to the question of the relation of time with the Ultimate Ego. He is eternal, but, as has been said before, not so in the sense in which a thing is supposed to last for all time. This implies a wrong view of time. It makes time external to Him. He is constant movement, constant change, and change is indeed unthinkable without time. But His time is not a serial time to which the distinctions of past, present, and future are essential; it is change without succession. If we were to imagine time as applied to Him as a line, then it is not a line already drawn for Him to move on. It must be imagined as a line-in-the-drawing, no part of which can be thought of as untraversed future. But it is wrong to imagine the time of the Ultimate Ego in spatial terms. It is pure duration. But what is pure duration? The nature of pure duration is "revealed by a deeper analysis of our own conscious experience." Ordinarily, we take our experiences to be in serial time. But "it is in the moments of profound meditation that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience. In the life-process of this deeper ego the states of consciousness melt into each

other. The unity of this ego is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality, but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole. There is no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the inner ego. "There is change and movement, but this change and movement are indivisible. Their elements interpenetrate and are wholly non-serial in character." Pure time of our own true self then is not a string of separate instants. It is time regarded as prior to the discloser of its possibilities. "It is time as felt, not as thought and calculated." It is not something outside in which the ego moves; it is "its inward reach, its realisable possibilities which live within the depths of its nature," and are being actualised in a free creative movement. It is intensive time, not extensive. It is not prior to self, as Bergson wrongly thinks. Neither pure time nor pure space can hold together multiplicity. It is the act of the self which can seize it in an organic wholeness of synthesis. "To be in pure duration is identical with being a self."

The time of the Ultimate Ego, on our own analogy, is also pure in the above sense. It is His creative movement, regarded inwardly as the infinite inherent possibilities of His nature, unfolding themselves in ever-new creations. He is pure duration, in which thought, activity, and purpose interpenetrate to form a unity—a unity in which the past is

rolled into the present and the future exists in the form of open possibilities.

According to Iqbal, Bergson rightly holds that experience is the past moving along and rolling into the present, but he is wrong in denying the teleological character to Reality on the ground that "the portals of the future must remain wide open to Reality." Bergson's objection, says Iqbal, is sound, if by teleology be meant the working out of a pre-ordained end. Such a view, however, would make the temporal order of things a mere reproduction or an imitation of an already determined and completed eternal mould. It would make pure time inapplicable to Reality. The Ultimate Ego is devoid of purpose, if by purpose is meant a foreseen end—a far-off, fixed, predetermined destination to which He is moving.

The Ultimate Ego is purposive, but not in the above sense. He is purposive in the sense in which our own consciousness is purposive. Our unity of consciousness does not only fold within itself the past but has a forward movement also. It has reference to a purpose, and purpose cannot be conceived without reference to the future. Purpose is really nothing but a forward movement in consciousness.

Remembering and anticipating both operate in our present state of consciousness. On the analogy of our own consciousness, the Ultimate Ego is through and through purposive in the sense that in

bringing Himself to each fulfilment by preserving and supplementing the past He has a forward movement. It further means that He is not a mere vital impulse, but is selective and is capable of ideas as living parts of His organism, rich with the wealth of possibilities, the very thinking and selecting of the details of which would mean their creation. Thus He holds up as a present reality not only the entire past within His unity throughout His movement but also the entire possibilities of His not-yet-determined creative knowledge or conscious creation.

This is a brief account of Iqbal's conception of God in its final stage. His studies in Western philosophy for his M.A. degree in India and his research work in Muslim Philosophy in England and Germany prepared the ground for Iqbal's philosophy in general and the problem of Divine reality in particular; and his early religious training supplied the seed out of which has grown a beautiful plant of the root of which I have given a rather dry and colourless account. As a result of the inner possibilities of the seed itself, the richness of the soil, the suitability of the climate or the temper of contemporary thought, the plant began to grow vigorously. But it was trained to take its final shape by the philosophies of Rumi, McTaggart, James Ward, Bergson and Nietzsche. Whatever the influence of others in other directions, with regard to the solution of the problem in hand, Iqbal's thought was

moulded chiefly by Ward.

Nietzsche's philosophy is Godless. His obsession with the idea of the superman makes his ideas of society and reality sink into insignificance. Bergson's "creative impulse" is very much like Schopenhauer's unconscious purpose. The ultimate reality for Iqbal, on the other hand, is God as conscious and personal. McTaggart finds the destiny and goal of the self in eternity[1] and not in serial time, but he is an atheist.[2] Rumi has very much in common with Iqbal, yet much of his thought can be interpreted in pantheistic terms. The case of Ward is, however, different. His influence on Iqbal is greater. To measure this influence one has only to see the common elements in their respective views about the problem in hand.

Both of them, after the manner of Kant, reject the three notorious arguments for the existence of God, discard Platonism, Pantheism, and Absolutism, and object to regarding omniscience as foreknowledge of a preordained reality and to applying the idea of serial time both to God and to the finite self—and all this for exactly the same reasons. Both are Pluralists, Theists, and Spiritual Monists. Both hold Panpsychism against Berkeley's occasionalism, and windowed monadism against Leibnitz's windowless monadism. Both believe in the creative

1. Cf. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence.*
2. Cf. *idem, Some Dogmas of Religion.*

freedom and immortality of the individual. For both the sensuous world is due to interaction between egos, the body is created by the mind to serve its own purposes, and serial time is only an act of the mind. Both hold on exactly the same grounds and in exactly the same sense that God is an infinite, conscious, omnipotent and omniscient spirit, which is immanent in the finite egos and yet transcends them just as every organism is immanent in its parts and yet transcends these parts. For both He is a perfectly free creative spirit that limits its own freedom by creating free finite egos, and for both this internal limitation is not inconsistent with His own perfect freedom. According to both, God is perfect throughout His creative progress, for this progress is progress *in* perfection, not *towards* perfection. Both hold that God's will functions through the will of the finite egos. Both believe with Wundt that reason can prove the necessity of faith, but cannot turn faith into knowledge. Both agree that belief in God is ultimately a matter of faith, though of a rational faith, that conviction or complete certitude about Him comes not from reason but from living, that direct communion with Him is gained only through *rapport* or love, and that it is only through love for Him that immortality is achieved by the finite self.[1]

---

1. Cf. James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism and the Realm of Ends.*

From all this Iqbal's indebtedness to Ward is obvious. Perhaps with full justice one can regard him as Ward's disciple, but it will be a mistake to think that Iqbal does not go beyond Ward's conception of God. He certainly does, and that also in a very important respect. Ward regards God as eternal, but fails to explain eternity, chiefly because he has no idea of time as non-serial. Iqbal, taking his clue from a saying of the Prophet of Islam in which time is identified with God, accepts Bergson's theory of pure duration with some modifications, and thereby succeeds not only in explaining Divine eternity but also in laying greater emphasis on the dynamic aspect of reality. Again, Iqbal's idea of perfection is not the same as that of Ward. It is partly Bergsonian and partly his own.

When we compare the methods of Ward, Bergson and Iqbal, we find that, like the Neo-Idealists of Italy, all three of them start from the individual experience. There seems to be nothing wrong with this procedure. Since we are certain before all other things of our own experience, it is much the best procedure, though, as Iqbal himself thinks, not the only right procedure, to make this experience the starting-point in our search for the Ultimate. Nevertheless, there is one great danger in this our best method of study. This danger lies in the pitfall of viewing everything anthropomorphically, and to me it seems that both Ward and

Iqbal have fallen into this pitfall. It is true that we cannot interpret the sensible world save in terms of our own experience. Even the electron as a unit of energy cannot be conceived save on the analogy of our own sense of effort. It is perhaps equally true that we cannot conceive of God except in terms of our ideals. Nor can we say that this interpretation of things in terms of our experience of facts and ideals is essentially false, without belying our emotional and volitional demands and without falling into extreme pessimism. We, therefore, seem to be justified in regarding our anthropomorphic conception of God as being in harmony with, or as a limited vision of, reality as a whole. We are perhaps also justified in thinking that this partial vision is capable of further development. Nevertheless, it seems to me clear that what reality is as a whole must for ever remain hidden from the finite self, for how can the part with all its limitations comprehend the whole, which essentially goes far beyond its compass?

Three

An Unfinished Letter

Gulafshan
Aligarh
26th August 1947

My dear Dr. Sinha,

I am extremely sorry for not having been able to fulfil earlier my promise of writing to you about *Iqbal's Message as a Poet*, though even to-day it is going to be only half fulfilled. I thoroughly enjoyed, its study, and I enjoyed it not because I agreed with its point of view, but because I found it so thorough in presenting a point of view with which I did not agree. It has the merit of being the first critical study of Iqbal. It is a frank and happy exposition of what you regard as true, and is wide in scope. No one who goes through the book can doubt your love of truth, your industry and thoroughness in the collection of material, the courage of your conviction and your large humanity. This is not at all surprising. On the contrary, it would have been surprising, if a book from the pen of a man of unique culture like yourself were not marked by these qualities.

Coming to the subject-matter of the book, I find myself in agreement with many of your conclusions about the *life* and *career* of Iqbal. I entirely endorse the judgment passed by you, Allama Yusuf Ali and Sir Abdur Qadir on Iqbal's career as a politician and as a practising lawyer. He did not succeed in either of these roles and those who know that art flourishes in adversity (as did Dante's) are glad that he did not. I am also inclined to agree with you that Iqbal was rather conservative in his attitude towards women. This is perhaps one of the weakest aspects of his thought. Evidently he did not give enough thought to it. His chief concern in this connection was confined to save the women-folk from some of the evils of Western life that were gradually creeping into their lives. I also admit that he was too hard on Plato and Hafiz, though not as hard as Dante on those whose philosophical and religious thought he did not like. There is a great difference between the philosophies of Plato and Iqbal and yet, in his denunciation of Plato, Iqbal ignores that there are at least four points of agreement as well: (*i*) both have the same theory of aesthetics; (*ii*) for both progress of the individual depends on the acquisition of Divine qualities; (*iii*) both are opposed to sheer democracy; and (*iv*) in their political theory both assign an important place to the superman (the philosopher-king in the one case and

perfect man in the other). With Hafiz Iqbal shares the idea of the efficiency of love as against the efficiency of the intellect in the acquistion of Divine knowledge, though, while Hafiz concentrates his mind on the emotional side of love, he emphasises the volitional side of it. Iqbal's just denunciation of the Neoplatonic elements in Muslim thought and degeneration in Muslim India and other Islamic countries, of the emotional type of mysticism into renunciative, other-worldly, parasitical and idolatrous modes of life and of everything else that nowadays passes off as mysticism, was poetically and symbolically transferred to the great fountain-heads of the virtues which were distortedly reflected through these false mirrors. Such transference, though an inexcusable licence in a philosopher, is a poet's privilege, provided, of course, his symbolism is not mistaken for the naked truth. Iqbal's symbolism in this case was liable to be misunderstood. It was *in fact* misunderstood and, therefore, had to be expunged from the text in the second edition of *Asrar-i Khudi* (*Secrets of the Self*). Nevertheless, his guilt was infinitely smaller than that of Dante who, to take one example, placed the Prophet of Islam (for whom you have so much respect and whose name you never mention without wishing him Peace) in one of the lowest chasms of Inferno "ripped from the chin down to the part that uttered the vilest sound;

between his legs the entrails hung" (Canto XXVIII).

Your contentions that Marx was the greatest expounder and Shelley a great poet of socialism are unquestionable (pp. 107 f.). But I still venture to agree with Mr. Sayyidain that "there is no poet or thinker of this age who has given expression to a deeper and more sincere faith in the unlimited potentialities of man and his great future" than Iqbal, and that "he was essentially a prophet of optimism and power." I do not see why the above position about Marx and Shelley on the one hand and about Iqbal on the other cannot be held together. They involve no inner contradiction, but you seem to think that they actually do.

I am in sympathy with you when you wish Iqbal had written all his poetry in Urdu. For long I myself deplored his resort to Persian and for almost the same reasons. But I was mistaken; for, like you, I too ignored the following three considerations. First, for Iqbal, the only remedy of the world's evils lay in the reconstruction of its social order in accordance with the principles of Islam, and in prescribing that remedy his first task was to reform those who called themselves Muslims. He, therefore, wanted his message first to go across the boarders of India to Islamic countries and then to the rest of the world. The status of Persian was higher than that of Urdu in

both of these spheres and, therefore, it suited his purposes better. Secondly, classical Persian, being older and richer than Urdu, could serve as a more suitable vehicle for his metaphysical ideas. In fact, on the same grounds he would have chosen Arabic for the expression of his thought, if he could write in that language with as much ease as he could do in Persian. Thirdly, poetry is nothing if it is not the expression of the human heart through the medium that lends itself most easily to that expression, and this medium depends on the linguistic acquisition of the poet. Indo-Persian was as natural to Iqbal as Urdu.

It is quite true that Browne does not mention a single Indian poet, and in the passages quoted on pp. 17-18, both he and Professor Habib speak despairingly of Indo-Persian literature, but what they say, though perfectly true of Indo-Persian prose, is not true of Indo-Persian poetry, much less of Iqbal's poetry, which is written in the Indo-Persian *language*, not in the Indo-Persian *tradition*. Browne was deeply interested in the literary history of Persia, as the title of his monumental work shows, and, therefore, Indo-Persian literature was really outside his scope. Besides, Iqbal's chief Persian works were written after the publication of Browne's work and could, therefore, find no mention in it, even if the author had wanted to take notice of the Indo-Persian poets. But should we ignore

the significant fact that his successor at Cambridge, Nicholson, thought it worthy of his position as a scholar to become a translator of Iqbal's *Asrar-i Khudi* (*Secrets of the Self*) and several other poems?

It is also true that the Persian Cultural Mission expressed the ideas mentioned on p. 123, but only a short while later the Persian Delegation as well as the Egyptian Delegation to the Asian Conference paid homage to the great Indian poet by going all the way to Lahore to visit his tomb. To-day Iqbal is not very much appreciated in Persia, except "in a few literary circles." It should be so, for usually it is only the expert that first notices the literature produced in a foreign land. But let half a century pass, and, if I am not wrong, Iqbal will be almost worshipped in Persia as well as in other Muslim countries. Even if Iqbal's verse cannot be appreciated by the masses in Persia or India, this fact can hardly reduce its value. Which masses in the history of India could ever appreciate in the real sense of the word the immortal philosophical verse of Sanskrit?

The charge that Iqbal ignored the needs of non-Muslim India in the matter of language is to a certain extent true, but we must not ignore the fact that he wrote in Urdu as understood by the Muslims and non-Muslims of the Punjab and the U.P., the language he had learnt in school, and not Urdu as the *lingua franca* which is spoken

in the market-place throughout India. If Tagore could write without blame in Bengali, the language of one province of India, not understood at all in other provinces, how can Iqbal be accused of writing in a language understood in at least two provinces? On this ground their poetry can debar neither of them from claim to immortality. The appreciation of high-class literature is always confined to the few. It is only the spirit of it that passes down to the masses.

As to the quality of Iqbal's verse, as early as 1904, Akbar Allahabadi supported him against Hasrat Mauhani who was then admittedly the most promising lyrical poet of India. Nazir and Arzoo have an important place in Urdu poetry, but, I am afraid, to compare them with Mir, Ghalib, Hali or Iqbal is sheer mockery. "Vulgarisation" is not an essential mark of good poetry.

Iqbal is undoubtedly a poet of Islam, and yet he has written more poems about Hindu India and Europe than any Hindu or European poet has ever written about the Muslim world. The titles of these poems are: "Ram," "Swami Ram Tirath," "Arif-i Hindi," "Bhartari Hari," "Nanak," "Tarana-i Hindi," "Sada-i Dard," "Himalah," "Naya Shawala," "Qaumi Git," "Shakespeare," "Locke," "Kant," "Hegel," "Schopenhauer," Comte," "Napolean," "Goethe," "Browning," "Wilheim Kaiser," "Bergson," "Tolstoy," "Marx," "Lenin,"

"Nietzsche," and "Mussolini." The fact that these poems are mostly appreciative is a proof of Iqbal's world-wide sympathies and his international outlook. Even towards the later part of his life, when he is supposed to be most anti-nationalist, he writes so touchingly and lovingly of India in "Shu'a-i Ummid" and "Ruh-i Hind" and the subsequent verses in *Javid Namah*. He loves India and the spirit of India, his motherland, but under no cirstances will he have her deified. He loves all that is of value in the world, but never will he have it identified with God.

Moreover, as Iqbal himself says in his letter to Nicholson, he has placed before the world a universal goal; but as it has to be realised, he has had to address it to a definite social group for its gradual realisation and he has chosen this group (the Muslim people) for giving a lead, not because he holds a brief for it, but because it is the bearer of a social system that does away with rank, colour, and caste, is generous in outlook and encourages selflessness and self-sacrifice in its self-assertion in the struggle for human advance—qualities which Europe notoriously lacks (*Iqbal Namah*, p. 468).

It is chiefly for this reason that Iqbal addresses himself to the whole of the Muslim world. He is an extra-territorialist in this sense, but he is not an anti-nationalist. You are right in holding that Islam is not opposed to nationalism, but, I am

afraid, not so in thinking that Islam in its spirit does not transcend nationalism and warrant pan-Islamism (p. 296). It clearly does so. Unity among the Mussalmans is one of the main injunctions of the Qur'an, and existence of the Caliphate for centuries is ample proof, if proof be needed, of Islam's transcendence of territorial nationalism in practice too. But even if it has never been brought into existence in the political sphere in the past, that is no reason why Iqbal should not hold it out as an ideal yet to be achieved. If an ideal has never been realised in the past, that itself is no reason for taking it to be unrealisable in the future. A great conception may not be immediately workable, but it can serve as an ideal which may realise itself after centuries or even millenniums.

It is true that the present Islamic States are not extra-territorial in their outlook, but that is accounted for by their backwardness, their disruption and Balkanisation by British machinations and by their seizure by the fever of nationalism that spread like an epidemic in Europe between the two world wars. Most of them are virtually the slaves of the West—perhaps more in spirit than in fact—and Iqbal had no illusions about them. A great leader or a great seer, if you please, has to lead the misguided and is not to be led by them. Iqbal induces the Mussalmans to aim at the highest social ideals for themselves and for the world and advocates extra-

territorialism. But he advocates extra-territorialism only as a step towards internationalism. Just as Islamic extra-territorialism transcends territorial nationalism, even so internationalism transcends its extra-territorialism. A world organisation for world peace via extra-territoriality or unity of national groups is already taking shape. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. are already following this pattern, and the United Kingdom and India are aspiring to do so. In each case political ideology is the main basis of federation. If Iqbal sets a similar ideal before the Muslim States, spreading from Morocco to Indonesia, which have in common something more than mere political idology, he hardly deserves being put in the dock for that. Nationalism is needed only as a stage in social development. The ultimate aim must be international, a world federation in some form or other. According to Iqbal, the Islamic idea of Divine Unity must be the basis of unity in the social sphere, as in all other spheres of being. According to this conception, Divine Unity is a spiritual fountain following into infinite actualities of the universe. God is in the universe and beyond, just as the human spirit is in the human body and beyond. For a man who has this conception of reality, neither the unity of an individual nor that of a nation, an extra-territorial group or world-State is illusion or redundant. Whichever of these organisations is not real is

ideal, and an ideal is nothing but one of the infinite inner possibilities of the spirit which are in the process of emergence into actualities. National unity is factual, extra-territorial unity is partly factual and partly ideal, and a world federation is still wholly ideal. Iqbal cannot be blamed for making an effort to add one more extra-territorial group to those already in existence. With the clear object of their ultimate consummation into one comprehensive world federation, Iqbal's position seems to be supported by sociological trends more than that of a rank nationalist or of one who aims at a single jump direct from nationalism to internationalism.

The view that religion is a personal affair was adopted by Turkey after the First World War. It is this view that meets your approval. But it is wrong to call it Islamic. Islam has both a personal aspect and a social aspect. Apart from being a relation of an individual with God, it is a social ideology, just as much as capitalism and dialectical materialism are social ideologies; and therefore, apart from being personal, it is the basis of both national and international life. That religion must play an important role in directing social life to moral ideals, is being gradually realised by Turkey no less than by Europe or the United State of America, and religious ideology, once discarded, is again being introduced in its post-war educational scheme. But even

a man's personal relations with God, as with his fellow-beings and things, is influenced by his education which again is a social function and not a mere private concern.

I deeply admire your study of Islam and your appreciation of it. No Muslim can help paying homage to a non-Muslim from whose pen can come the contents of Chapter XIX of *Iqbal's Message as a Poet.* I entirely agree with you that there is not much difference between theism and pantheism from the religious point of view. Among the interpreters of the Hindu Scriptures we find both Shankara and Madhava. Among those who interpret Islam we have both Ibn Arabi and the Shaikh of Sirhind. The Qur'an, like the Upanishads, gives a monotheistic explanation of the universe in its broad outline and leaves the details of this conception open to interpretation. All universality ignores particularity and religion that claims to be universal inevitably has to do so. There is one God, but is He transcendent or immanent or both? He is called by different names, but are these the names of His essential attributes or of the attributes metaphorically so called? He is eternal, everywhere, and nowhere, but what kind of relation has He to space and time? From Him all actions flow, though men are responsible for their doings; but how can that be possible? Such are the questions which the Qur'an left for the human intellect and the human

heart to solve. To be a true Muslim it is enough to be a monotheist, whatever the details of one's conception of monotheism, and I dare say, the same is enough also to be a true Hindu. But if the right of interpreting unitarianism is conceded to Shankara, Madhava and Ibn Arabi, can it be justifiably denied to Iqbal? I think he had the right to that freedom and he exercised it remarkably well. As to which one of these interpreters of the one Ultimate Reality is right, opinions shall long differ. But there can hardly be any difference of opinion about the fact that their inquiries were highly philosophical and deeply sincere.

You have been good enough to appreciate my article contributed to *Iqbal as a Thinker*, to say many kind things about it, and to quote it extensively in the chapter on "Iqbal's Philosophical Background." I feel highly flattered. Indeed it would be ungrateful of me if I do not thank you for that. But it is not out of modesty that I regard my article as a brief statement about only one aspect of Iqbal's philosophy, viz. his conception of God. It can hardly claim to have done justice to his whole philosophy. He has left a fairly well-rounded system of thought a critical study of which will require years of patient work. As I have shown in my article, Iqbal has been deeply influenced by thinkers of the West as well of the East. But if his system is great, and I hold it to be so, its greatness does not

by any means decrease, if he is found to have been influenced by the philosophy of his predecessors, for not even Plato, Aristotle, Shankara or Kant could boast of having remained free from all such influences. Nor indeed is it any the less great because it has been expounded mostly through the medium of verse, even as Indian philosophy is not any the less great because its early expression was also through that medium. Poetry has only added to its appeal.

Now I venture to express my views most candidly with respect to those matters in which we do not at all see eye to eye with each other; and I do so with the hope that you will give these views as well as those that I have so far expressed due consideration in your final conclusions; for your *present* conclusions are regarded by you as "tentative rather than definite, provisional rather than final, and at best suggestive rather than conclusive" (p. 465).

I think both you and Forster have been unfair to Iqbal in holding that his sole achievement in *The Secrets of the Self* has been his effecting a connection between Nietzsche's conception of the superman and the Qur'anic idea of God (pp. 319-21). Nietzsche so transformed would no longer be Nietzsche. Iqbal had undoubtedly admiration for the vitalism of Nietzsche, but Nietzsche was not his real inspirer. The idea of the perfect man is an old one in Muslim philosophy. I believe it had its roots in Plato's

conception of the philosopher-king and the Islamic idea of a prophet, but it found its highest development in the speculations of Ibn Arabi, al-Jili and Rumi. It would be a travesty of facts to regard Nietzsche-made atheist as Iqbal's ideal or guide. It is true that he would like Nietzsche to believe in God, in social equality, in immortality of the soul, in spiritual rather than physical strength, in struggle for moral ends within the limits of moral rules and in war only as a defensive measure; but then all this would make a world of difference. It is really wrong to judge Iqbal's philosophy of the superman from *The Secrets of the Self* alone. This work was intended by Iqbal to be read along with *The Mysteries of Selflessness* and another work which he had planned to write and in which, as he himself told me, he wanted to synthesise the results of the earlier two books.

As Iqbal himself writes in his letter to Dr. Nicholson (*Iqbal Namah*, p. 458), he began to write about the superman before he had read Nietzsche's works and even before the echoes of his beliefs had reached his ears. It is, therefore, certain that his vitalism had its origin in the philosophical vitalism of the medieval Muslim thought, though it gained support and strength from the vitalism of such writers as Thomas Carlyle, Nietzsche, and his senior contemporaries, Bergson, McDougall, Lloyd Morgan, Sellars, S. Alexander, Bernard Shaw, Richard

Wagner, and Stefan George. Nietzsche's influence is at best only one of the contributory factors to Iqbal's intellectual make-up.

Your interpretation of the synthesis of Islam and Hinduism is totally different from that of a Muslim and particularly from that of Iqbal. You speak of it most approvingly, while Iqbal quite justifiably regards it as an unhealthy growth. He strongly believes in Hindu-Muslim unity, but what he dislikes most is the incomplete Islamism of the Muslims of India and also of other lands; and the inroads into Muslim life by some Hindu idolatrous customs such as the worship of tombs and partaking of water, food and offerings from tombs; and by some socially retrograde ways like the imposition of restrictions on the dress and diet of widows, the condemnation of widow remarriage and the stratification of humanity into castes. These are just the things Islam counts among the evils of human life, and if it has been "synthesised," or, more correctly, infested with them, it must be purged of them. Iqbal regards it as his mission to purify Muslim life of them. He does not share with you and Smith (pp. 309 and 444) the mechanistic view of life, according to which what sociologically happens is inevitable, and therefore one must "adapt oneself to environment." He rightly holds a teleological view of things and regards man as the moulder of his environment and the maker of his destiny.

According to him, Divine will itself functions through the free-will of the right type of man. By his own will man must harness the forces of nature to his own moral ends and accept nothing as inevitable. If social forces mar society, he must re-make it. Iqbal does not want Islam, which for him is the purger of social evils, to be gradually absorbed by Hinduism. He does not want Islam in India to meet the same fate as Buddhism. If true Islam cannot live in the midst of Hinduism, he would rather have a separate homeland for it. He sees the chance of Hindu-Muslim unity in good neighbourliness and in the recognition of the community of the basic beliefs of both, but not in the haphazard admixture of social customs, much less in the distortion of the main features of Islam. To me it is a matter of great surprise that a scholar of Islam like you should not have seen the justice of Iqbal's position on this point.

It seems to me that you have not fully appreciated Iqbal's philosophical position, because it is totally different from the generally accepted Hindu point of view. But nothing has given me greater surprise than the view that Iqbal's poetry is unmusical and lacks rhythm. There are hundreds of his poems which are supremely musical and rhythmic. I would have given examples, if they were only a few.

You have compared Iqbal and Tagore. Both

of them are great and great as poets. But their greatness lies not in creating identical poetry either in form or in content. The poetry of each has its own distinctive qualities. Tagore confines himself to a material which is in itself attractive to the human soul. The content of Iqbal's poetry is often abstract and difficult. As you and Hakim rightly point out (pp. 104-05), some philosophical thought does not easily lend itself to poetical expression. And Iqbal's certainly does not. But this fact does not detract from his worth as an artist. On the other hand, it enhances it. It is all the more creditable for him that out of hard and difficult material he has been able to create exquisite verse. It is much easier to give beautiful form to a content which in its own right has a universal appeal than to give such form to an indifferent content. The criticism of "lack of satisfactory expression" one would be prepared to advance against his English *Lectures*, but under no circumstances against his poetry . . . .

William James and Iqbal

IQBAL was one of William James' younger contemporaries, for he was born thirty-eight years before and died twenty-eight years after his death. Both were brought up in religious families and were specially interested in philosophico-religious questions. William James, throughout his life, retained a yearning for some sort of religion and was content if people held whatever beliefs satisfied them. Iqbal found a religion for himself and had a burning desire to impart his interpretation of it to mankind. Both were unquestionably the most influential thinkers of their respective countries, and each gave his nation a start in a fresh mode of thought and a new method of approach to old problems, thereby reviving interest in issues supposed by the ultra-modern to be dead and long buried. Both did this and much besides.

Although the philosophical doctrines of these great thinkers were basically different in some respects, they were remarkably alike in some others.

William James wrote philosophy in exquisite prose, Iqbal in superb poetry. William James was

a gentle Pragmatist who, in the sphere of thought, would wait for a judgment to prove itself to be true by working well in experience, and, in the sphere of action, would advise us to take a jump and simply trust that the part of reality which is beyond our control will meet our jump. Iqbal, on the other hand, was a dashing vitalist. He would surcharge with emotion what he thought was a true judgment and energise it to work well in experience. He would not wait for the reality beyond our normal control to meet us half-way, but would, by an act of worship, make it impossible even for God not to come and meet us so. William James considers faith almost instinctive with every man. Iqbal goes further and finds in the prayer of the faithful a proof for the existence of God. Prayer seeks fellowship with God. Once a true seeker gets that fellowship, he gets a sweet intuition of Reality—an intuition of God, and desires no further proof of His existence. Man, according to William James, is a discoverer of truth, but he makes that discovery only by letting the judgment take its course, and seeing its career in common and scientific experience. Man, according to Iqbal, is, before anything else, a creator of reality, a co-worker of God in the shaping of things. God works His will through man's will and man, in his turn, by acts of worship, can work his will through the will of God. Man is also for him a discoverer of truth, which he discovers not so much

through common and scientific experience as through mystic experience. William James thinks that the greatest part of the philosophical problems, chiefly those which touch on religious fields, are not susceptible to decisive evidence one way or the other and can be solved only by faith. He, therefore, lets beliefs about them form themselves according to the make-up of the minds that entertain them. Iqbal agrees that they are not susceptible to rational treatment, but finds their solution in the act of worship and in the mystic vision of the worshipper.

Notwithstanding these differences in their outlook, Iqbal and William James are kindred spirits, both are Empiricists and make experience the criterion of truth, though Iqbal so extends the sphere of experience as to cover mystic experience as well, a sphere which for him is the fountain-head of all the basic religious truths. Both are idealists, because both believe in spiritual realities and regard them as realities in the truest sense. Both are enemies of Monism and Singularism. Monism and Singularism, according to them, give the conception of a block universe, in which all things are rigid, eternally fixed and immutably united to one another by internal relations. According to both, Monism may be satisfactory to the extreme intellectualists, but it is not true of the universe, in which we live—a universe which abounds in particular things and is full of diversity, change, beginnings and ends,

novelty and freedom. Both object to the coherence and correspondence theories of truth and, as I have said before, find new criteria of truth in experience. Both regard intellect as an instrument in the service of the human will and regard this instrument valuable, for it can yield knowledge. But as it grasps reality piecemeal, it yields only hypothetical knowledge and utterly fails in the solution of many fundamental problems of philosophy.

Both William James and Iqbal are Pluralists and Meliorists. For them the universe consists of a plurality of individuals and is at bottom a moral order. It is yet unfinished and the future is rich with infinite possibilities which can be brought into actuality by co-operative individualities. It is indeed a world of facts, but it is primarily a world of free spirits and values. For both the laws of nature express the collective habits of spontaneous individualities, which habits are more real than those laws.

Both of them were real educators of men. In William James' time, America was already a great nation, every day inventing and creating new things. He wanted the Americans to be psychologically, philosophically and religiously minded and to a large extent succeeded in this task. Iqbal's people were already philosophically and religiously minded, but centuries' slumber had created in them a stupor. The task he assigned to himself was to

awaken them, make them scientifically and *truly* religiously and philosophically minded and above all to revitalise them and make them God's co-workers in the shaping of things.

Both believed that efficient causes work through final causes and nothing about life can be explained by reference only to antecedents without reference to purposes. Both were convinced that the course of human history is determined by great men. Both were themselves great men who gave direction to their respective national thought and in Iqbal's case even to national action.

Long live their memory!

Five

Iqbal's Theory of Beauty

IQBAL was undoubtedly a genius, and one of the greatest poets of the world. This, however, does not mean that he received nothing from the environment in which his genius developed. A healthy seed has to depend for its development on the soil and the moisture from which it draws its elements of growth. The tallest oak, no less than the tiny seedling, is rooted in the soil from which it springs. The same is true of all gifted men. Like every other thinker, Iqbal was a child of his age, and his thought grew out of the thoughts of previous thinkers. He gathered the entire harvest of Eastern and Western philosophy and art. But this does not mean that he left the thought of his predecessors where he found it. What he gathered from others became the foundation upon which he built the stately edifice of his own system. Just as in the case of other great thinkers, so in him "all previous thought became transfigured under the light of his genius."

The artist's personality, like all personality, develops in a society embodying the accumulated

heritage of the past, and it bears the stamp of that society; consequently, its expression in his works of art also bears that stamp. If society in a certain age of peace and prosperity is satisfied with its intellectual, moral and social achievements and has fixed beliefs, set ideals, clear codes of behaviour and decorum, the artists of that society will, as a rule, develop the formal side of their personalities at some sacrifice and to the comparative exclusion of their content side. And since the formal side of their lives will dominate their personalities, their art will be classical. They will "look to the past," to the balanced, the stable, the standard, the typical and the commonly accepted and felt, with confidence and respect; and this outlook will find expression in their works.

But after a time society becomes rigid. Its convictions become conventions and dogmas and prejudices, and its rules become chains. The delicate, dynamic social equilibrium gets jammed. Spirit changes into form and form into abstraction. Life becomes stagnant and art becomes empty, commonplace, repetitive, mechanical.

Yet this state does not last very long. Life also has its autumn and spring. From within the stagnated society rises the spirit of revolt, and history takes a new turn. The frozen gods are shattered, customs and conventions are shed, and fresh thoughts and basic emotions sprout forth in all their

freshness. The shell of dead form breaks, and a new spirit issues forth. The old rules and techniques and standards are discarded, and a sense of freedom prevails. There is a bustle and struggle in life, and a shaking of the social balance. New ventures are undertaken, some destined to succeed and others doomed to fail. The artist being more sensitive than an average man becomes the first embodiment of the new spirit. The formal side of his nature leaves the conventional and the customary, and retains only the instinctive and the natural. The content side of his personality—the assemblage of his sentiments and impulses—bursts forth into violent emotionality, natural sensibility, romantic thrill, subtler, though vaguer, thoughts, wild dreams, new ideals, new forms and new visions, and he produces romantic works.

During the glorious period of the Mughal Empire our literature was classical. From the later part of the thirteenth century onward, Muslim thought had gradually become more and more mystical. Basic principles of this mysticism were Platonic as modified by Plotinus and the Muslim thinkers like Ibn Sina, Ibn Arabi, al-Jili, and others. Plato identifies God with Good and Beauty and in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* he gives priority to Beauty. It is the desire to perceive the loveliness of God's Eternal Beauty which sets in motion the dynamic of Eros or love. Eros fills the human

heart with longing and enthusiasm, inspires youth with invincible courage, and breathes in the poet's songs. There are stages of beauty, but the ultimate Beauty is the source of them all. All particular beauties are changeable and perishable, but Divine Beauty is eternal. Every beautiful object is so because it participates in Divine Beauty—because Divine Beauty reveals itself in it. Nature is beautiful because it participates in the One Eternal Beauty. The sight of every beautiful object reminds one of the Eternal Beauty and this accounts for the mystic rapture, the emotion, the joy, with which we greet the sight of the beautiful. Eternal Beauty reveals itself suddenly as a "wondrous vision" to those who love Him and perceive with courage and under standing and hold fast to the last.

Plotinus accepts this theory of Divine Beauty and lover's pursuit as given in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. He recalls, in fresh phrases, the ladder of love of the *Symposium* upon which the lover has to climb, to have a glimpse of Beauty above the beauties of the earth. It is the beauty of incorporate things which creates in us a love for them. The beauty of the soul consists in becoming the image of God who is the Supreme Beauty. It is the aspiring and burning love which gives one the intuitive power of apprehending the Supreme Beauty. Spirit in thinking of Him only knows Him; spirit in love becomes one with Him. The experience of the soul,

when it becomes one with God, is too immediate to be described. It is then an indescribable vision—the beatific vision. The Supreme Beauty makes those who love Him with a mighty longing also beautiful.

For Ibn Sina, everything in the world is imperfect and striving for its completion. The willing of or striving for perfection is the secret of growth and is named love. The perfection it aims at is beauty. The entire universe is moving by the power of love to the one Supreme Beauty, the most perfect and best. Just as iron-filings are attracted by a magnet, so also are all things attracted by God. Eternal Beauty is the source, the essence, and the ideal of everything and brings into existence all movements of things—force in physical objects, growth in plants, instincts in beasts and will in man.

These Neoplatonic ideas were further developed by the mystics of Islam. Some of them like Ibn Arabi gave them a pantheistic turn. This theory of Beauty and Love became traditional in the classical poetry of the East.

Towards the end of the Mughal Empire society became degenerated and fossilised and its literature became extremely formal, sex-ridden, repetitive, opiating, sombre and depressing. Though not failing to express the wails and travails of the times in a symbolic garb, it had on the whole become artificial and conventional and consisted chiefly of ornate prose and lyrical verse called the *Ghazal*.

When Iqbal was passing through the school and the college, the Romantic movement had already begun under the pioneering spirit of Ghalib, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Shibli, Hali, Chiragh Ali and others. They started a revolt against the conventional modes of life and literature, and thus attempted to infuse warmth in the chilled and frozen body of Muslim society in India. When a society begins to emerge from the period of its stagnation, new wine is poured into old bottles, old forms are used to express new content, and thus there is a fusion of Classicism and Romanticism, till Romanticism grows into full vigour. While the Sir Sayyid group were transforming Urdu literature, they were doing so within the framework of the classical theory of beauty and love. They were pouring new wine into old bottles.

Almost a century before the dawn of Romanticism in Muslim India, the Romantic movement in arts and general aesthetic theory had started in the West. From the last years of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, its influence was widespread. It was represented in France by Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine; in Germany by Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Herder and the Schlegals; and in England by Blake, Scott, Wordsworth, Browning, Shelley, Keats, Ruskin and Byron. Western Romanticism was a revolt against the primacy of reason, the tyranny of oppressive

institutions, and the fetters of artificial forms, rules, manners, social and religious conventions, and set ideas, attitudes and traditions. It gave intuition and imagination, surcharged with emotion, the place of reason, and held in high esteem new ideas, new forms, sincerity and emotionality in expression, love of nature, and a keen sense of beauty. Therefore, no wonder that Neoplatonism, as also the ideas and forms of foreign literature, had a strong appeal for these Romantics. Translations were made from Sanskrit and Persian literature, and poets like Hafiz and Umar Khayyam who represented classical literature for us became the favourites of Romanticism in the West. How *Ghazal* attracted the Schlegals and Goethe is well known. The influence of Neoplatonism was, however, more marked on the British Romantics. Like all Neoplatonists, they rose from the admiration of nature to belief in the Absolute; like them, they made imagination the vessel of wisdom, and intuition the source of true knowledge. The poetic genius was, for them, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the poet was a diviner of events. Thus we see that the Neoplatonic elements of our classical literature were also the elements of British Romanticism. Old bottles of the East were new wine for the West.

Owing to our political connections with England and the fact that, since Macaulay's time, English had become the medium of instruction in

our country, it was, naturally, British Romanticism which could influence our literature in the first instance. During Iqbal's school and college days, English Romanticism decorated the syllabuses of the University of the Panjab as well as those of other universities, and, as a result, a wave of Romanticism ran over the whole of the country. Its poetry of nature and its Neoplatonic theory of aesthetics, which was, to a large extent, identical with what had become, in practice, traditional in Persian and Urdu poetry, had a deep influence on him. In this latter respect, the denouncer of Plato for his metaphysics was in his theory of Beauty his disciple.

If, like all Romantics of the *Makhzan* group, Nazir, Yaldram, Nazir Ahmad, Muhammad Ismail, Ejaz, Haidar Ali Tabatabai, Hadi, Sarshar, Chakbast, and a host of others, he sings in praise of nature, it is because of his admiration for nature, but more so because in everything in nature he finds the one Eternal Beauty revealed:

حسن ازل ہے پیدا تاروں کی دلبری میں
جس طرح عکس گل ہو شبنم کی آرسی میں
حسن ازل کی پیدا ہر چیز میں جھلک ہے
انساں میں وہ سخن ہے، غنچے میں وہ چٹک ہے
یہ چاند آسماں کا، شاعر کا دل ہے گویا
واں چاندنی ہے جو کچھ، یاں درد کی کسک ہے
انداز گفتگو نے دھوکے دیے ہیں ورنہ
نغمہ ہے بوئے بلبل، بو پھول کی چہک ہے
کثرت میں ہو گیا ہے وحدت کا راز مخفی
جگنو میں جو چمک ہے، وہ پھول میں مہک ہے

Again,

چھپایا حسن کو اپنے کلیم اللہ سے جس نے
وہی ناز آفریں ہے جلوہ پیرا نازنینوں میں

But nowhere does Iqbal express his Neoplatonism as beautifully as in "Salima":

جس کی نمود دیکھی چشم ستارہ بیں میں
خورشید میں، قمر میں، تاروں کی انجمن میں
صوفی نے جس کو دل کے ظلمت کدے میں پایا
شاعر نے جس کو دیکھا، قدرت کے بانکپن میں
جس کی چمک ہے پیدا، جس کی مہک ہویدا
شبنم کے موتیوں میں، پھولوں کے پیرہن میں
صحرا کو ہے بسایا جس نے سکوت بن کر
ہنگامہ جس کے دم سے کاشانۂ چمن میں
ہر شے میں ہے نمایاں یوں تو جمال اس کا
آنکھوں میں ہے سلیمیٰ، تیری کمال اس کا

There is a flood of natural beauty all around us, and yet our souls have an unquenchable thirst for something higher:

محفل قدرت ہے اک دریائے بے پایان حسن
آنکھ اگر دیکھے تو ہر قطرے میں ہے طوفان حسن
حسن کوہستاں کی ہیبتناک خاموشی میں ہے
مہر کی ضو گستری، شب کی سیہ پوشی میں ہے
آسمان صبح کی آئینہ پوشی میں ہے یہ
شام کی ظلمت، شفق کی گل فروشی میں ہے یہ
عظمت دیرینہ کے مٹتے ہوئے آثار میں
طفلک نا آشنا کی کوشش گفتار میں
ساکنان صحن گلشن کی ہم آوازی میں ہے
ننھے ننھے طائروں کی آشیاں سازی میں ہے
چشمۂ کہسار میں، دریا کی آزادی میں حسن
شہر میں صحرا میں ویرانے میں آبادی میں حسن

In the next two lines, Iqbal gives expression even to the metaphysical theory of Plato that the soul before birth enjoyed the presence of Eternal Beauty, and its yearning for beauty in this life is a yearning for regaining that loss. He says:

روح کو لیکن کسی گم گشتہ شے کی ہے ہوس
ورنہ اس صحرا میں کیوں نالاں ہے یہ مثل جرس
حسن کے اس عام جلوے میں بھی یہ بیتاب ہے
زندگی اس کی مثال ماہیء بے آب ہے

Later on, in the Introduction to *Asrar-i Khudi* and in the *Lectures*, Iqbal condemned the pantheistic mystics for their wrong metaphysics, but, during the period we are considering, he was not only a Neoplatonist, but also a full-fledged pantheist. The verses I have so far quoted may or may not be interpreted pantheistically, but there are others which can be understood in that sense alone, e.g.

تارے میں وہ ، قمر میں وہ ، جلوہ گہ سحر میں وہ
چشم نظارہ میں نہ تو، سرمۂ امتیاز دے

* * *

وہی اک چیز ہے لیکن نظر آتی ہے ہر شے میں
یہ شیریں بھی ہے گویا بےستوں بھی کوہکن بھی ہے

And Iqbal is fully conscious that he is treading on dangerous ground, for he ends one of his pantheistic poems in these words:

شریعت کیوں گریباں گیر ہو ذوق تکلم کی
چھپا جاتا ہوں اپنے دل کا مطلب استعارے میں
جو ہے بیدار انساں میں وہ گہری نیند سوتا ہے
شجر میں پھول میں حیواں میں پتھر میں شرارے میں

The Neoplatonic thesis, that it is Beauty that stimulates all love and desire, is expounded in this line:

حسن ہے عشق کی فطرت کو ہے تحریک کمال

and Ibn Sina's version of this theory is refleced in a dialogue between the moon and the stars :

کہنے لگا چاند ہمنشینو ! اے مزرع شب کے خوشہ چینو !
جنبش سے ہے زندگی جہاں کی یہ رسم قدیم ہے یہاں کی
ہے دوڑتا اشہب زمانہ کھا کھا کے طلب کا تازیانہ
انجام ہے اس خرام کا حسن آغاز ہے عشق، انتہا حسن

Beauty is all-pervasive and is imminent even in the love that it excites.

کبھی اپنا بھی نظارہ کیا ہے تو نے اے مجنوں
کہ لیلیٰ کی طرح تو خود بھی ہے محمل نشینوں میں

Now, everyone knows that the subject of these verses is by no means original. All their freshness lies in the Romantic modes of presentation. A hoary doctrine has been so dressed up as to appear in the prime of life. There is nothing new in the doctrine, for it came to Iqbal as a legacy from the past. But this is not the journey's end. For that we have yet to go a long way.

Iqbal's theory of beauty so far relates only to the first period of his poetic career, which ended in about 1908. There is a time in one's life when one accepts the wisdom of the ages uncritically, but it is often succeeded by a period of scepticism or doubt. Iqbal's period of complacency was also followed by a short period of doubt about the existence

of the One Eternal Beauty. He gave expression to this doubt in some exquisite verse. Take, for example, the question he raises in "Jalwa-i Husn":

جلوۂ حسن کہ ہے جس سے تمنا بیتاب
پالتا ہے جسے آغوش تخیل میں شباب
ابدی بنتا ہے یہ عالم فانی جس سے
ایک افسانۂ رنگیں ہے جوانی جس سے
جو سکھاتا ہے ہمیں سر بگریباں ہونا
منظر عالم حاضر سے گریزاں ہونا
دور ہو جاتی ہے ادراک کی خامی جس سے
عقل کرتی ہے تاثر کی غلامی جس سے
آہ! موجود بھی وہ حسن کہیں ہے کہ نہیں ؟
خاتم دھر میں یا رب وہ نگیں ہے کہ نہیں ؟

"Beauty" puts the same question to the Creator Himself, but, alas, gets a negative reply:

خدا سے حسن نے اک روز یہ سوال کیا
جہاں میں کیوں نہ مجھے تو نے لازوال کیا
ملا جواب کہ تصویر خانہ ہے دنیا
شب دراز عدم کا فسانہ ہے دنیا
ہوئی ہے رنگ تغیر سے جب نمود اس کی
وہی حسیں ہے، حقیقت زوال ہے جس کی
کہیں قریب تھا، یہ گفتگو قمر نے سنی
فلک پہ عام ہوئی، اختر سحر نے سنی
سحر نے تارے سے سن کر سنائی شبنم کو
فلک کی بات بتا دی زمیں کے محرم کو
بھر آئے پھول کے آنسو پیام شبنم سے
کلی کا ننھا سا دل خون ہو گیا غم سے
چمن سے روتا ہوا موسم بہار گیا
شباب سیر کو آیا تھا، سوگوار گیا

Before I go further I should like to remove one possible misunderstanding. It may be said that in this connection I have ignored the influence of religion on Iqbal. But that is not so. Iqbal was a staunch Muslim and yet a philosopher Muslim. Like every Musalman, he believed that *Jamal* was one of the ninety-nine names of God which denoted the different shades of Divine attributes. The Muslim philosophers, however, speculated about the nature or the essence of God. Those who were under Aristotle's influence thought He was in essence Reason; another class held that He was the Highest Good, the *summum bonum*; and yet another group regarded Him as the One Supreme Beauty. The Neoplatonic mystics belonged to the last group and Iqbal in this first period of his development was entirely under their influence, though the concept of *Jamal* as a Divine attribute must have played its role in moulding his thought as much as theirs. All that I have held is that his theory as well as theirs was basically Neoplatonic.

We have noticed that, to begin with, Iqbal, following the Neoplatonic tradition, regarded beauty as eternal and as the efficient and final cause of all love, all desire, all movement. But later on there was a change in his position. First, a doubt and, then, a kind of pessimism crept into his mind about the significance of beauty in this world, and with this began the second period of his mental

development which extended from 1908 to 1920.

Iqbal's stay in Europe and his visits to Spain and Sicily brought before his mind the past glory of Islam and made him deeply conscious of the dark and dismal state in which the Muslim world had fallen. It also aroused in him a burning desire to reinvigorate the Musalmans. Immediately after his return from Europe he gave expression to this burning desire in the well-known poem which he addressed to Sir Abdul Qadir:

آٹھ کہ ظلمت ھوئی پیدا افق خاور پر
بزم میں شعلہ نوائی سے آجالا کر دیں
ایک فریاد ہے مانند سپند اپنی بساط
اسی ھنگامے سے محفل تہ و بالا کر دیں
اھل محفل کو دکھا دیں اثر صیقل عشق
سنگ امروز کو آئینۂ فردا کر دیں
جلوۂ یوسف گم گشتہ دکھا کر ان کو
تپش آمادہ تر از خون زلیخا کر دیں
رخت جاں بتکدۂ چیں سے آٹھا لیں اپنا
سب کو محو رخ سعدیٰ و سلیمیٰ کر دیں
دیکھ یثرب میں ھوا ناقۂ لیلیٰ بیکار
قیس کو آرزوئے نو سے شناسا کر دیں
بادہ دیرینہ ھو اور گرم ھو ایسا کہ گدا
جگر شیشہ و پیمانہ و مینا کر دیں
گرم رکھتا تھا ھمیں سردیٔ مغرب میں جو داغ
چیر کر سینہ اسے وقف تماشا کر دیں

One who wanted to put life into the dead body of the Muslim world could do so only by replacing the other-worldliness of mysticism by the philosophy

of power, force, movement, and super-human effort.

There are always some historical forces which prepare the ground for a change in the thought and life of men and nations. The same forces conspired to drive pantheism out of Iqbal's mind and put his thought into a new mould.

After the middle of the nineteenth century, the Romantic movement in the West had taken a new turn. In England Browning had written verse surcharged with force, and Carlyle had published several works in admiration of the heroes of the world in which he included our Holy Prophet. The latter's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, *Sartor Resartus*, *The French Revolution* and *Frederick* were all written in the spirit of hero-worship and admiration of the heroic will. This vitalistic position was reinforced by *The Emergent Evolution* of the vitalist biologist, Lloyd Morgan. It was further spurred by McDougall's *Social Psychology* and *Outlines of Psychology*, published in 1908 and 1910, respectively, in which works heroic energy was taken to be the essence of life and the sentiment of egohood or self-regard as the core of human personality. H.G. Wells' imagination was inspiring men to conquer time and space, and the scientists were busy, as they still are, in making that conquest. Among other literary men Bernard Shaw was a great believer in life-force. His high admiration for Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin

is enough to prove his deep interest in Vitalism and Heroism.

In Germany the Romantic philosopher, Kant, had already drawn attention to the freedom of the will as a factor in determining our appreciation of beauty, and Schopenhauer to the will as a constituent of the world. But Goethe went further. It has been said about him that his search for the nature of beauty culminated and ended in praise of the divine power of love, "love" which eternalises the image of the beloved by creating it afresh every moment. Like Goethe's, Iqbal's search for the nature of beauty was also destined to end in praise of the power of love. And as for Goethe, so for Iqbal love eternalised the image of the beloved every moment afresh:

هر نگارے که مرا پیش نظر می آید
خوش نگاریست ولے خوشتر ازان می باید

Later on Marx developed a doctrine of dialectical activism—a philosophy of history according to which the dialectical driving force of history is man's relation to the means of production, man for whom objects have no meaning without reference to action and whose chief task is not to know the world, but to alter it. Engels extended this dialectical activism to the whole of reality.

When Iqbal was in Germany, Nietzsche's philosophy of the will-to-power was having a hold on the minds of the German people. Stefan George,

Richard Wagner and Oswald Spengler continued Nietzsche's work of the cult of the Superman. Driesch in his work ascribed the activities of living organism to entelechy, a vital force.

At the same time France came under the influence of Bergson's philosophy of *elan vital*, movement and change.

In Austria Freud made sex-love the source of all fine arts and Adler indentified the ego-energy with the will-to-superiority.

This vitalistic philosophy rising simultaneously in so many countries of the West greatly appealed to Iqbal. It had affinity with the idea of the perfect man which had a long history in our own literature. The Platonic conception of the Philosopher-King had been fully developed by Muslim philosophers like al-Ghazali, ibn Sina, ibn Arabi, Rumi, al-Jili, and others. The subject of the Perfect Man takes more space in Rumi's *Mathnawi* than any other topic except the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Rumi, like Nietzsche and other heroic vitalists, believed in evolution, in the freedom, possibilities and eternity of the self, in the will-to-power and the value of the super-egos, and in the destruction of old forms for the construction of new modes. Like Bergson, he believed in movement as the essence of reality and in intuition as the source of knowledge.

In his metaphysics, Iqbal was now a heroic vitalist inspired by the desire of reviving Islam,

and of making it a nation of heroes. He adopted Rumi as his guide and master, ignoring all those passages of his *Mathnawi* which could be interpreted pantheistically. But he was not yet a full-fledged heroic vitalist. In his thought in this period beauty still retained its high position as the creator of love. Indeed, it is now that Iqbal gave the clearest expression to that idea:

هرچه باشد خوب و زیبا و جمیل　　در بیابان طلب ما را دلیل
نقش او محکم نشیند در دلت　　آرزوها آفریند در دلت
حسن خلاق بهار آرزو　　جلوه اش پروردگار آرزو

In his metaphysics Iqbal never was a Platonic Idealist. Now he is more a heroic vitalist than a Neoplatonist. God is Beauty, but He is also the Supreme Ego, the Supreme Centre of Energy. Man too is an ego and a life-centre. His goal is conquest, even the conquest or capture of God—the capture of divine attributes—for his own enrichment, and that is possible by a burning love of God. He emphasises the role of desire in life and goes even so far as to call poor Plato an old sheep whose false philosophy of inaction turned lions into goats, who had no taste for action, and loved only the non-existent.

بسکه از ذوق عمل محروم بود　　جان او وارفتهٔ معدوم بود

Desire is now regarded as the fire of life, the wine of life, the spur of life or the music of the organ of life. He owes allegiance to both beauty and desire. Beauty was his first love, but desire or the will-to-power which is the essence of the ego is his second

love, and, therefore, the more favoured of the two. Iqbal is now a heroic vitalist in philosophy, a reformer in religion and is at the half-way house from Neoplatonism to heroic vitalism in his theory of aesthetics. These three elements have not yet entered into organic relationship within his personality, and consequently in his poetic imagination. Religious and social reform is still external to his poetry, though not outside his philosophy. That is why during this period his reformative poems, "Jawab-i Shikwah," "Asrar-i Khudi," and "Rumuz-i Bekhudi," are the least poetic of all his works. All three are didactic. Poetry is subordinated to an external goal—the reforms of the Musalmans, and the awakening of their latent energies.

But this was only a transitory phase. This was still a period of Iqbal's development and in a genius like him was bound to lead to a period of maturity. The concept of the One Eternal Beauty was gradually becoming weak. It was essentially Neoplatonic and was inevitably destined to lose its privileged place in the mind of one who was now an avowed enemy of Plato.

Psychologically, aesthetic vitalism had already taken root in his mind. If two equally strong ideas govern a man's mind and one of them is weakened, the other rules supreme. When beauty lost its place in Iqbal's speculation, it was natural that love should take its place.

In the first and the second period of Iqbal's thought, as I have explained at some length, beauty created love. Now in the ensuing period, extending from 1920 to the last day of his life, the process of creation is reversed. Now will-to-power or ego-energy becomes the creator of beauty. The essence of Reality is no longer beauty, but love or the will of the ego. God, the Supreme Ego or Eternal Will, is the Ultimate Reality. He is the Creator of the universe. Man is also a free ego and like Him the creator of things. God has made nature, but it is God's vicegerent, man, who has made it beautiful. In this capacity man can face his Creator with pride and say:

تو شب آفریدی چراغ آفریدم   سفال آفریدی ایاغ آفریدم
بیابان و کہسار و راغ آفریدی   خیابان و گلزار و باغ آفریدم
من آنم کہ از سنگ آئینہ سازم   من آنم کہ از زہر نوشینہ سازم

All the beauties of nature are the creation of the will. "Desire creates them, not they, desire."

بباغان باد فروردین دہد عشق   براغان غنچہ چون پروین دہد عشق
بہ برگ لالہ رنگ آمیزئ عشق

Beauty is perishable, but love is eternal :

حسن می گفت کہ شامے نہ پزیرد سحرم
عشق می گفت تب و تاب دوامے دارم
اے عالم رنگ و بو! این صحبت ما تا چند
مرگ است دوام تو، عشق است دوام من

The secrets of life which beauty cannot disclose, love can:

غمین مشو کہ جہان راز خود برون ندہد
کہ آنچہ گل نتوانست مرغ نالان گفت

Beauty is only a quality of the ego in action, of the will-to-power, when it climbs to its heights. Ugliness appears when the will-to-power, the fountain of all life and all growth, runs dry:

نمود جس کی فراز خودی سے ہے وہ جمیل
جو ہو نشیب میں پیدا قبیح و نامحبوب
مری نظر میں یہی ہے جمال و زیبائی
کہ سر بسجدہ ہوں قوت کے سامنے افلاک

Bodies, no less than their beauty, are the expression of the ego's will-to-achievement:

چیست اصل دیدۂ بیدار ما　　بست صورت لذت دیدار ما
کبک پا از شوخیٔ رفتار یافت　　بلبل از سعیٔ نوا منقار یافت

For the Neoplatonist Iqbal, beauty was the creator and the goal of love; for the budding vitalist Iqbal, it was the creator of love, but not its goal; now for the full-fledged heroic vitalist Iqbal, love is everything, the sea, the sailing vessel and the seashore:

یم عشق کشتیٔ من ، یم عشق ساحل من
نہ غم سفینہ دارم ، نہ سر کرانہ دارم

Iqbal's position now comes very near Heine's who treated *reason* scornfully, regarded *life* as the source of all beauty, and did not shrink from admiring even the great despots, provided they expressed the fierce vigour of untrammelled life-force.

It was during this period that heroic vitalism, the spirit of reform and the sense of beauty got fully integrated in Iqbal's personality and, consequently, in his poetry. He intuited beautiful images and

beautifully executed them in immortal songs. For now he did not, starting with a story, exhort the poor, for example, to rise against the rich, but his personality roused his imagination to the production of an image in which God ordered His angels to awaken the poor and to destroy the palaces of the rich and burn their farms:

اٹھو مری دنیا کے غریبوں کو جگا دو

Such poems do involve a purpose, but the purpose is not external to them. They do not lead on to it. They involve it as their integral, irreducible and irremovable part. It is such poetry that has made Iqbal one of the greatest poets of the world.

Iqbal's theory of beauty is essentially a theory of expression. For it is the life-force of the ego which expresses itself in the realisation of beauty.

Now there are several aesthetical theories of expression. Four of them are subjectivistic and two objectivistic. The first one of the subjectivistic theories is that of Freud, according to whom beauty is the expression of the contemplator's sex-desire. The second is that of Robert Vischer, Lipps, and Volkelt who hold that beauty consists in empathy or the contemplator's subconscious sympathetic feelings projected into objects. The third is the theory of Schiller, Herbert Spencer, Karl Groos, Conrad Lange and others for whom beauty is the expression of the contemplator's activity of play. The fifth and the best known of all is the doctrine

of Croce, who holds that beauty is the full expression of the contemplator's emotions.

Iqbal has nothing in common with any of these writers in his theory of beauty, though a great deal in his theory of art. They are all psychological, and Iqbal's theory is essentially metaphysical. He explains beauty not in terms of the contemplator's mind, but in terms of a universal principle, a vital impulse working behind life in all its aspects, including the aesthetic aspect.

Of the objectivistic theories one is Iqbal's own, which I have just explained, and by which beauty is a quality of things created by the expression of their own egos. For their loveliness they owe nothing to the contemplator's mind, but everything to their own inner life-force.

The second objectivistic theory is also metaphysical and is that of Plotinus. According to him, the visible world is beautiful, because it expresses the life of the Universal Spirit, and the bodies of all living beings are beautiful, because they express their lives. The difference between Iqbal's position and his lies only in the conception of life itself. For Plotinus as for Plato, life is essentially rational; for Iqbal, it is essentially volitional. That is why the former's theory, in spite of its kinship even with Iqbal's vitalism, is idealistic, while Iqbal's is activistic. This shows that even when Iqbal considers himself farthest from that despicable man, Plato,

he is still closely related to him through Plotinus. One would not be far wrong if one said that Iqbal is a vitalist Plato and Plato an idealist Iqbal. Of course, there is a great difference between their positions, but there is also a great deal of resemblance.

If one were to choose between the objectivistic theories, one would prefer Iqbal's, because it is more in keeping with the basis of life as generally accepted to-day.

But the most significant question before us is whether Iqbal's theory fares well against all the subjectivistic theories or not. It is a bold thing to criticise the thought of the greatest genius that Islam has produced during the last seven centuries. But to accept the absolute validity of Iqbal's doctrine is to accept a dead stop in thought. According to his own teachings, life is an eternal flow and its possibilities are infinite. It is the duty of everyone to make an endeavour to know the truth. It is that endeavour which has led me to the view that neither Iqbal nor any of the Subjectivists gives us the whole truth about the nature of beauty. I have two arguments to advance. First, that unless there are some characteristics in the objects which act as stimuli on the contemplator's mind, there is no reason why certain objects should look beautiful to us and certain others ugly or indifferent. Neither sex-desire, nor play-activity, nor the projection into objects of

the sympathetic feeling, nor a group of emotions as a whole, expresses itself in relation to *all* objects without distinction. There are always some particular objects with certain specific characteristics which stimulate the sex-desire, play or emotions in us. In other words, there must be some peculiar characteristics in the so-called objective world by virtue of which objects arouse subjective expression. These peculiarities of the objective world cannot be entirely set aside in an adequate theory of beauty.

Secondly, each one of these Aestheticians emphasises only one aspect of personal life, the expression of which he regards as the real source of beauty. Actually, human personality cannot be dissected into parts. Mental structure is an organic whole and it always functions as a whole. Beauty does involve expression, but not the expression of only one part or only one aspect of our personality. It involves the expression of personality as a whole.

Iqbal has given us immortal poetry, but I wish I could say the same about his theory of beauty. If beauty is only the expression of the life of the ego, and according to Iqbal there is life in everything, then why is it that all things do not seem to us beautiful in different degrees? Why is it that generally the females are attracted by the males and the males by the females? Why is it that the moon, which is almost dead earth, looks so beautiful? Why is it that the energy of the light rays

from the moon called moonlight and of those reflected through water vapours called the rainbow look so beautiful, and the energy passing through us in an electric shock does not? Why, again, do the feathers of the peacock look so beautiful and its legs so ugly? Why is not a murderer in action more beautiful than a sleeping child? Why is it that even a dead butterfly looks beautiful, but not a charging buffalo, a pig or an ass? And, again, why is it that if vitalistic "فرمان خدا" is superb, no less superb are Ghalib's pessimistic lines:

کوئی امید بر نہیں آتی کوئی صورت نظر نہیں آتی
موت کا ایک دن معین ہے نیند کیوں رات بھر نہیں آتی
آگے آتی تھی حال دل پہ ہنسی اب کسی بات پر نہیں آتی

and such couplets of Mir as:

شام ہی سے بجھا سا رہتا ہے دل ہے گویا چراغ مفلس کا

It seems to me that Iqbal's vitalistic theory fails to answer these questions satisfactorily, and a complete theory of beauty cannot leave them unanswered.

I think subjectivism is incomplete without objectivism, and objectivism without subjectivism. Some characteristics of the objective world seem to be essential for an object to become beautiful for us, and it cannot become so unless our personality as a whole plays upon them, and our impulses, desires, ideas, images and feelings dye them with their own hues. As Jigar has said:

جس کے ہر اک جمال میں پنہاں میری رعنائی خیال بھی ہے

Objects having certain specific characteristics arouse emotions, desires, ideals and images in our minds, and, when these mingle with our sensuous experience of these objects, we call them beautiful. It is not one desire, like the sex-desire, nor one instinctive impulse, like play or sympathy, nor the whole group of emotions, which thus becomes one with the specific qualities of our experience of objects to make them beautiful for us. Actually, in contemplation our whole personality comes into play. On the other hand, it is not only one objective quality—call it its inner life-force, vital impulse, love, or whatever you will—that makes an object beautiful. The object must possess some other qualities as well; and again these must pass through the sieve of the contemplating mind before it can be called beautiful or ugly. Even if inner vital force is the only quality that is essential for an object to be beautiful, I shall say with Asghar:

حسن کا رنگ بھی ہے ذوق نظر کا محتاج

Here I should like to quote a passage or two from one of my own writings (*Beauty, Objective or Subjective?*):

"It [beauty of the phenomenal objects] is neither purely objective nor purely subjective. It arises out of a synthesis or construction made possible by the interrelation of objects of a certain sort and a subject in a certain condition. The object must in its own right possess one or more of the characteristics of

unity, harmony, rhythm, sex-indication, class-indication, etc., and the subject must have apart from other things a dynamic equilibrium of impulses. In the elementary forms of beauty impression plays a prominent part; in the more complex forms of it, expression. If, after Kant, bare objects be called phenomena, then these aesthetic facts are born of a union between the objective and subjective phenomena; and beauty is a unique quality of these aesthetic facts. Union between the object, possessing one or more of the characteristics, of unity, harmony, rhythm and other forms that touch the attraction-group of instincts, and the subject, with impulses in a state of dynamic equilibrium, is necessary to bring to life this fair child. On this view if an object, instead of presenting a harmonious system of relations, lacks unity, contains irregularities or is too large or too small to be smoothly apprehended, and arouses and is fused with discordant impulses and purely unpleasant feelings, we have the experience of ugliness" (pp. 72-73).

"I regard human knowledge, good, and beauty, as incident to human nature. Man is finite and these are finite. We are not in possession of completely self-consistent knowledge, perfect good or beauty, but only relatively consistent knowledge, relative good and relatively abiding beauty.

"But in spite of our finitude, we have a vague conception of an infinite, self-subsistent, self-consis-

tent and perfect whole of reality which is at once an Individual embracing all individuals, a Universal enveloping all universals and a Value embodying all values in their completion—an Absolute, in itself Perfect Knowledge, Perfect Goodness and Perfect Beauty. Beyond this conception neither our thought nor our imagination can go. It is the highest ideal of our will and in its contemplation our feelings are fully appeased.

"No doubt we also have the opposite conception of a being which is all ignorance, all inconsistency, all evil and all ugliness: but the idea of the actual existence of such a being is painful and repulsive to our minds.

"The testimony of the whole of our soul,—the criteria of the intellect, clarity and consistency; the criterion of our emotions, satisfaction or *rasa*; the criteria of our will, our highest hopes—all lead not to the knowledge (for the finite cannot know the infinite), but to the faith that such an infinite Absolute which is Perfect Knowledge, Perfect Beauty and Perfect Good, does exist. This faith involves the corollary that the human subject is a part of that Infinite Reality; It is subsumed in it and does not stand over against it; and thus within this higher sphere the distinction between the subject and its object. the finite ego and the non-ego, remains no longer valid. There is nothing outside the great all-enveloping Unity that may be supposed to be the subject

apprehending it. Therefore while the beauty for man, the phenomenal beauty, is both objective and subjective, the Absolute Beauty which is not known to us finite beings, but in which the finite beings must have faith, can be neither objective nor subjective. It is an all-embracing Unity in which all objects and subjects and all values are subsumed.

"Love, hope, sense, imagination and intellect, working in unison, create in us the vision and the faith that Reality in which the knower, knowledge and the known are one, is a dynamic force, creating in us, its parts, an ever-changing, ever-growing series of phenomena, the physical world, and at times exciting in us emotions that blend with a certain type of environment and thus envelop the seer, the sight and the seen . . . yielding, at moments of contemplation and art creation, the microcosmic union of these. It is at such sublime moments that we, the parts, feel that we are one with the whole" (pp. 84-87).

During his period of maturity Iqbal gave us a correct view of reality and of the basis of all our experience. The ultimate reality is a free dynamic creative Ego and the finite egos, inorganic or living, are also free dynamic creative forces in different stages of development. Both the object contemplated and the subject contemplating are ultimately free dynamic ego-forces; and whatever is produced by the subject contemplating or by the object as

expression of its own inner urge, or by the interaction of both, or again by the One Supreme Reality above the subject-object distinction, is ultimately the expression of a free dynamic force or such forces in interaction. So far all should agree with Iqbal whether they are subjectivists, objectivists, or, like me, subjective objectivists. But that is an explanation of all reality and all experience—not of beauty in particular. For the appearance of beauty in this world some further analysis is needed and that Iqbal has left to his successors.

In the end, I must clear one possible misunderstanding. It might be said that Iqbal was writing poetry and not theorising about beauty. That is perfectly true, and the theories of aesthetic that we have attributed to Iqbal in the different stages of his development are nowhere given by him as philosophical doctrines. They are implicit in his poetry and we have extracted them from it. He was essentially creating beauty and not writing a thesis on aesthetics, and in doing the task he had assigned to himself, he achieved unparalleled success. Nevertheless, it would be most misleading—indeed, most disparaging to Iqbal—to think that he had no theory of beauty as a foundation for the sublime edifice that his great genius built. It must always be borne in mind that he was not a mere poet, but a philosopher-poet.

Six

Iqbal's Theory of Art

IN a lecture which I delivered in this very Hall under the auspices of the Bazm-i Iqbal on Iqbal's Theory of Beauty, I observed that the theories of beauty that I attributed to Iqbal in the different stages of his development were nowhere given by him as philosophical doctrines, and since they were implicit in his poetry, they had to be extracted from it. Such is not the case with his theory of art. On this part of aesthetics he is very explicit. He has something definite to say in criticism of some other hypotheses and has made some positive observations even about individual arts.

The question what determined his views on art is closely related to the question what determined his personality, for it is the personality of an individual and his experiences that find expression in art. Towards the end of the last century Taine held that art is the product of its environment and nothing else. As the plant is determined by climate and the quality of the soil, so, according to him, is a poem determined by the social "temperature." The Marxist critics further restrict this social

temperature in urging that the determining factors in history are ultimately the economic forces of production and reproduction, and the artists reflect their class and time. One may not accept this extreme and yet narrow relativism for the simple reason that it ignores the geographical, biological and psychological factors which also go towards the making of a personality; it is, nevertheless, true that all minds, and more so the highly sensitive minds of the artists, are greatly affected, negatively or positively, by the society in which they live. Their art is the expression of their response to their impression of the social environment—an expression which shapes the impressions and carries them along as parts of its texture. Iqbal's poetry and his view of art are greatly determined by the social conditions prevalent in his country during his life-time. His literary art is the most significant art of a society emerging out of a period of decadence. A society's period of decadence is a period of ebb in social life, and, unless the stream is wholly dried up, it is followed by a period of flow. The artists who appear at the rise of the tide have the force of rushing waters—a force which is at the same time destroying and conserving—destroying of لا and conserving of الا:

شان خلیل ہوتی ہے اس کے کلام سے عیاں
کرتی ہے اس کی قوم جب اپنا شعار آذری

This is true of Iqbal and true of his art and his

doctrine of art which both reflect his personality. His reactions to his society are of the nature of a revolt against decadence and slave mentality which crept into it as the inevitable consequences of a foreign rule; and are, therefore, saturated with an emotionally surcharged apprehension of values—values that belong to that society's past and those which he visions for its future. If at times he appears to be a reactionary, it is so because he sees in the past some eternal values and wants them to be seen and actively pursued by those whom decadence has made blind to them. There is much in the past which is sheer rubbish and it is well that the present is rid of it, but there is something at least which is pure gold and which a new society can ignore only at its own peril. If he seems to be a revolutionary, it is so because he sees the future pregnant with new values. It is this view of the past and the future which is distinctive of Iqbal's poetry and which has greatly moulded his theory of art.

Most writers on art regard art as functional, as having some purpose. But in the beginning of the nineteenth century a movement was vigorously started against functionalism in France by Flaubert, Gautier and Baudelaire, in Russia by Pushkin and in England by Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde and by the American writer, Edgar Allan Poe. Actually this group received this movement as a legacy from Romanticism. Its germs are found

in such Romantics as Friedrich Schlegel and Heinrich Heine, both of whom believed in the freedom of art. The slogan of this movement was "Art for art's sake." By this it was meant that beauty is a specific quality of art. It is the whole or the supreme and absolute intrinsic value, other values like truth and goodness being either subordinate to it or irrelevant to it. With this supreme value art exists for its own sake. Within life it has a domain of its own, independent, autonomous and complete in itself. It has no goal and serves no end beyond itself, "no mission to fulfil other than that of exciting in the soul" of the contemplator "the sensations of supreme beauty." It is its own purpose and fulfils this purpose or rather itself by just being beautiful. It is worth having on its own account. An ulterior end of a work of art—morality, instruction, money, or fame—far from determining its artistic worth, is, on the other hand, hostile to that worth. Ulterior ends lower artistic value rather than raise it.

"We believe," says Gautier,[1] "for us art is not a means but a goal; an artist who pursues an object other than the beautiful is not an artist."

Again, "A thing that becomes useful ceases to be beautiful." For Oscar Wilde, "the first condition of creation is that the critic should be able to recognise that the sphere of art and the sphere of

---

1. *The Autonomy of Art*, Preface.

ethics are absolutely distinct and separate."[1]

If beauty is the supreme quality of art alone, what about nature? Is it not beautiful in its mountains, woods and streams? The artists of the school generally regard nature as "hostile or even mean and despicable." Flaubert detests reality and the beauty of the Alps has no appeal for him. Baudelaire finds nature "in its native hues monotonous and boring." As art has to deal with the highest and absolute value, it is made to replace Philosophy and Religion. Sociologically, the movement of art for art's sake was a movement of extreme individualism that appeared as a result of decadence —a period of art which was destructive of all aesthetic values of the previous age.

There is one thing in favour of the protagonists of art for art's sake that they do not confine beauty to any region within the domain of art, but there was an analogous movement initiated about half a century earlier by the Psychologist, Johann Friedrich Herbart, and his followers, and it was taken up a few decades later by Hanslick, Fielder, and, in our time, by Clive Bell and Roger Fry. This group makes a distinction within art between simple elements and their relations, i.e. between the content of art and the form of art, between the story, the characters, the scenes, sentiments, sensations, images,

---

1. "The Critic as Artist," *Writings*, Vol. V, p. 210.

and meanings, on the one hand, and language, metre, rhyme, cadence, and style, on the other. The content, according to them, has no aesthetic value. It is a mere accident or a mere vehicle for the artistic effect. *What* you convey through art does not matter; what counts is *how* you convey it. What you convey may be good or bad, true or false, right or wrong; it does not affect the value of art, for that depends entirely on the form you give it. All aesthetic value is exclusively concerned with form or relations. Thus the formula "art for art's sake" is changed into the formula "form for form's sake." For these formulists, in music, for example, beauty resides in none of the individual notes. Neither of the single notes whose relation makes, say, the fifth interval, "has by itself in the least that character which attaches to it when they sound together." Consequently, artistic taste is "the result of perfect apprehension of relations formed by a complexity of elements." These experimental psychologists undoubtedly succeeded in discovering a few aesthetically pleasing relations. Adolf Zeising discovered the "Golden Section," a division of a geometrical figure in which the proportions of the parts divided are about 3:5. Zimmermann attempted to determine the pleasing relations and ratios in the ideas and images in a poem. Wilhelm Unger found some harmonious relations of colours. Nevertheless, the endeavour of this group to explain the

whole field of aesthetic experience on formulistic lines completely failed. Their failure to solve the aesthetic riddle was due to their complete neglect of content—colours, sounds, ideas, images, emotions, and sentiments. They did not realise that a work of art is an organised whole, an indivisible unity, the aesthetic value of which cannot be ascribed to any one factor. As A.C. Bradley observes, when we are reading and enjoying a poem we do not see substance and form apart. The distinction between substance and form is valid, but not relevant in connection with aesthetic value. The aesthetic value of a poem lies in the whole poem and not in any part of it. "The end, substance and form of poetry [and so of all art] are all so blended in real art that it is difficult to extricate one of them without injury to the others."

While the movement of "art for art's sake "suffered from excess by making art supreme in the realm of life, and thus extending its domain far too far, the formulists' movement suffered from defect in ignoring the content of art and attributing all aesthetic values to mere form.

These two movements were strong when Iqbal began writing poetry. But the first one remained entirely unnoticed by him. The chief reason, perhaps the main reason, was that it was mainly a continental movement and Iqbal had not extensively studied any of the continental languages. Besides, the

writings of its English representatives could not get entrance into India. A movement for the freedom of art, from the alleged foreign influences, was after all a freedom movement. How could its entry into a slave country be allowed by the influential professors of our colleges who were all Englishmen in Iqbal's student days? When he started seriously thinking about aesthetic problems, this movement had already spent its force and, therefore, did not deserve much notice. But had he taken notice of it, he would have been definitely hostile to it, for he is a confirmed functionalist, and functionalism is its logical contradictory. To the second movement he is explicitly opposed; he lays great stress on content which the formulists completely ignore. For him, music, for example, without the content of volition, emotions and ideas is no better than dead fire.

نغمہ می باید جنوں پروردہ آتشے در خون دل حل کردہ
نغمہ گر معنی نہ دارد مردہ ایست سوز او از آتش افسردہ ایست

When he writes:

سوز سخن زنالہ مستانہ دل است
ایں شمع را فروغ ز پروانہ دل است

or

آیا کہاں سے نغمہ نے میں سرور ہے
اصل اس کی نے نواز کا دل ہے کہ چوب نے

or

نقش ہیں سب نا تمام خون جگر کے بغیر
نغمہ ہے سودائے خام خون جگر کے بغیر

he is as emphatic on the significance of emotions and sentiments for art as Ghalib when he said:

حسن فروغ شمع سخن دود ہے اسد
پہلے دل گداختہ پیدا کرے کوئی

In consonance with his general theory of life, he makes will the ultimate source of the artistic effect, for in the last analysis the whole content of art—sensations, feelings, sentiments, ideas, and ideals—arise from this source. He says:

جان مارا لذت اندر جستجوست   شعر را سوز از مقام آرزوست

Of the many theories of art the oldest perhaps is the theory that art is imitation. It was held by both Plato and Aristotle. Plato disapproves of art, because it emulates natural objects which are themselves faulty appearances of reality; in other words, because it imitates the shadows of what are themselves shadows of reality. He speaks disparagingly of poets whose false statements about God and men have a baneful effect on the minds of the young, and he condemns drama because, by imitating strong emotions, it stimulates and strengthens emotional tendencies in us and makes them difficult to control. Aristotle approves of art, because it is human making in the image of divine making, for it emulates the universal in knowledge and God is the highest universal, and emulates nature and God is the prime mover of nature. He approves of art also, because it arouses emotions by imitating the tragedies and comedies of life, and thus purgates

emotions, and makes them easy for us to control.

Iqbal agrees with Plato in condemning poets of a certain type on similar grounds. Quite like Plato he disapproves of drama in his poem "Tiatar," because it kills our personality or egohood. Personality is the centre of life. If you remove that, nothing will be left in art.

حریم تیرا خودی غیر کی معاذ اللہ
دوبارہ زندہ نہ کر کاروبار لات و منات
یہی کمال ہے تمثیل کا کہ تو نہ رہے
رہا جو تو تو نہ سوز خودی نہ ساز حیات

He also agrees with Aristotle in approving poetry in so far as it is human creativeness and creativeness is a divine quality. But unlike both, he does not conceive of art as imitation. Although as a romantic he is a great admirer of nature, yet, according to him, art is not the imitation even of nature, for the artist creates, and imitation is not the same thing as creation. In fact, he regards nature as an obstacle in the way of our creativeness. He declares that "Resistance of what *is* with a view to creating what ought *to be*, is health and life. All else is decay and death."[1] He is anxious to have art freed from the shackles of nature, for he says:[2]

فطرت کی غلامی سے کر آزاد هنر کو
صیاد هیں مردان هنرمند که نخچیر

According to him, the artist who imitates nature is a beggar at nature's door and the one who builds

---

1. Foreword to *Muraqqa-i Chughtai*.
2. *Darb-i Kalim*, "Ahram-i Misr," p. 115.

upon nature or re-creates nature unfolds to us the secrets of his own being. His creations possess eternal beauty. Denying the gods his genius makes is denying God Himself.

آں هنر مندے که بر فطرت فزود   راز خود را بر نگه ما کشود
حور او از حور جنت خوشتر است   منکر لات و مناتش کافرست

In a beautiful dialogue between God and man, Iqbal shows how man, by his aesthetic activity in the sphere of useful arts, has not imitated nature but has improved upon it. This is how man addresses the Creator:

تو شب آفریدی چراغ آفریدم   سفال آفریدی ایاغ آفریدم
بیابان و کہسار و باغ آفریدی   خیابان و گلزار و باغ آفریدم
من آنم که از سنگ آئینه سازم   من آنم که از زهر نوشینه سازم

In rejecting imitation as the genus of art, Iqbal is at one with most modern writers on art. But this outright rejection of the imitation theory of art is not quite consistent with his own doctrine, for there is a type of imitation of which he is himself an advocate. It is the imitation of Divine attributes in our own personalities. He uses the word "assimilation," but as this assimilation makes no reduction in the attributes of God, it is hardly different from imitation.

Opposed to those who hold the doctrine of art for art's sake are the functionalists, that is, those for whom art has a goal or a purpose. These functionalists are divided into several groups, each of which has its own view of the function of art.

According to one group, the purpose of art is to give pleasure. Aristotle himself is a functionalist of this group. According to him, art is imitation, but it is an imitation which has a certain psychological and sociological goal. This goal is the pleasure that results from the purgation of pent-up emotions. During the medieval period, St. Augustine held that the function of art is to create beauty and beauty is that which, having been seen, pleases. Catelvetro, a writer of the Renaissance, was of the view that poetry is "to be distinguished by its aim of giving pleasure from science which aims at truth."[1] Likewise, Fracastoro and other radical critics of the Renaissance "were to say that the only thing to be considered in a work of art was the pleasure it gives." Its truth, its power of teaching, its balance of its own wit . . . were to be thrust back to let stand in accented isolation the one end of pleasure.[2] In the eighteenth century, Lord Kame and David Hume, two British scholars, took more or less the same position. Coming to our own times, among literary men, George Santyana holds that the function of art is to please, but to do so, not as Aristotle held by purgation of emotions, but by objectification. Among psychologists, Freud is a fulfledged Aristotelian, as the function of art for him

---

1. Catelverto, *Poetica d'Aristotle*, pp. 29, 586, Trans. Gilbert, cited by Gilbert and Kuhn, *History of Aesthetics*, p. 173.
2. Gilbert and Kuhn, op. cit., p. 192.

is not only pleasure but pleasure by the purgation of emotions, or, to use his own words, by wishfulfilment. Art relieves the minds of the artists and the contemplators of all tensions by indirectly satisfying their pent-up desires. Iqbal is himself a functionalist. But very rightly he does not subscribe to this view of the goal of art. Had he done so, he would not have denounced classical Persian poetry, the pleasure-giving qualities of which he concedes.

ہے شعر عجم گرچہ طربناک و دل آویز
اس شعر سے ہوتی نہیں شمشیر خودی تیز

Iqbal is fully conscious of the pleasure-giving quality of his own poetry which, besides being یک چمن گل یک نیستان نالہ is also یک خمخانہ مے. All art is pleasing indeed, but pleasure is only one of its effects rather than its goal. Nor does he accept the Freudean theory of indirect wishfulfilment unconditionally. It is psychologically that art is an escape of pent-up emotions حرف تمنا ہے جسے کہ نہ سکیں روبرو and it does relieve the mind of tensions کھل تو جاتا ہے مغنی کی بم و زیر سے دل, but this relief by release of emotions is not the purpose of art. Sometimes, it may even kill desire and when it does so, it is of no significance for Iqbal.

نہ رہا زندہ و پائندہ تو کیا دل کی کشود

And, on the other hand, when the soul is welling up with new desires, its yearning for new ideals does not decrease even by the release of emotions through art.

تپ شعلہ کم نہ گردد زگسستن شرارہ

Let us now come to the second group of functionalists. The most noted of those who belong to this group are Plato, Ruskin, Guyau, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Shaw, and Iqbal. For Ruskin, the artist is a prophet and a teacher. For Guyau "the principle of art is life itself." Art is a "methodical whole of means chosen to create the feeling of beauty" and this feeling of beauty "is the consciousness of society in our individual life." "The highest aim of art is to make the human heart throb, and, as the heart is the very centre of life, art must find itself interlaced with the whole moral and material existence of mankind." According to Tolstoy, art has for its purpose "the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings." For Ibsen, the purpose of art is criticism of life. Shaw says about his *Pygmalion*: "It is so intensely and deliberately didactic that I take delight in throwing it at the head of the Wiseacres who repeat the parrot-cry that art should never be didactic." Its success in Europe and America "goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else."[1] Broadly speaking, for all these writers the function of art is social reform. But the father of functionalism in art is really Plato. According to him, both in respect of its content and its form art must serve ethical and instructional ends. The magic

1. Shaw, *Pygmalion*, Preface.

of art must be used only for the production of good citizenship. In music, for example, only those melodies should be allowed which make the listeners war-like and brave, and inspire them to valorous deeds, or those which would make them sober and temperate, orderly, just, and reverent to the gods. The pleasure-giving quality of art is a useful accompaniment of reason for placing men on the right path. Plato strongly condemns those whose art is a source of moral corruption. He even recommends their expulsion from the State. Iqbal, though an avowed antagonist of Plato in his metaphysics, is his disciple in his theory of art. The purpose of art is the same for both.

No great writer within my knowledge has pleaded the cause of didactic art more eloquently and censured the poetry of decadence more strongly than Iqbal. According to him, art has no meaning without reference to life, man, and society. The first aim of art is life itself. Art must create in minds a yearning for eternal life.

مقصود ہنر سوز حیات ابدی ہے　　یہ ایک نفس یا دو نفس مثل شرر کیا

The verse which brings a message of eternal life furthers the divine purpose like words of the Archangel and his voice announces the day of judgment. Poetry keeps the field of life green and bestows upon humanity the recipe for life everlasting.

وہ شعر کہ پیغام حیات ابدی ہے
یا نغمۂ جبریل ہے یا بانگ سرافیل

شاعر دل نواز بھی بات اگر کہے کھری
ہوتی ہے اس کے فیض سے مزرعہٗ زندگی ہری
اہل زمیں کو نسخہٗ زندگی دوام ہے
خون جگر سے تربیت پاتی ہے جو سخن وری

Art is a valuable means for the achievement of life.

اے میان کیسہ نقد سخن   بر عیار زندگی او را بزن

The second aim of art is the making of men. If art does not build up personality it is of little avail,

گر ہنر میں نہیں تعمیر خودی کا جوہر
وائے صورت گری و شاعری و نائے و سرور

and if it does, it is next to prophethood.

شعر را مقصود اگر آدم گریست   شاعری ہم وارث پیغمبریست

The artist must infuse spirit, manliness and courage into the chicken-hearted

نوا پیرا ہو اے بلبل کہ ہو تیرے ترنم سے
کبوتر کے تن نازک میں شاہیں کا جگر پیدا

and create yearning in the hearts of men for ever-new ends and ideals.

باد صبا کی موج سے نشو و نمائے خار و خس
میری نفس کی موج سے نشو و نمائے آرزو

The third aim of art, according to Iqbal, is social advance. He exemplifies his view of art and its relation to society in poetry. The poet, according to him, is the eye of the nation.

شاعر رنگین نوا ہے دیدہٗ بینائے قوم
مبتلائے درد کوئی عضو ہو روتی ہے آنکھ
کس قدر ہمدرد سارے جسم کی ہوتی ہے آنکھ

Nay, he is the nation's very heart.

شاعر اندر سینهٔ ملت چوں دل   ملتے بے شاعر انبار گل

With prophetic powers the artist should rouse nations and lead them to great, greater and yet greater heights.

شاعر کی نوا ہو کہ مغنی کا نفس ہو
جس سے چمن افسردہ ہو وہ باد سحر کیا
بے معجزہ دنیا میں ابھرتی نہیں قومیں
جو ضرب کلیمی نہیں رکھتا وہ ہنر کیا

Of what value is the verse which cannot raise an emotional storm in society.

جس سے دل دریا متلاطم نہیں ہوتا
اے قطرۂ نیساں وہ صدف کیا وہ گہر کیا

Plato severely criticised Homer and Hesiod for basing their poetry on legends which were fictitious and false, setting thereby wrong ideals before the young and thus corrupting their morals. Tolstoy condemned the art of French decadence for expressing the views of the degenerate ruling class, catering to the perverted appetites of the well-to-do and for being artificial, obscure, involved, and affected. Iqbal denounces the decadent art of this sub-continent in no uncertain terms. In his Foreword to *Muraqqa-i Chughtai*, he writes, "The inspiration of a single decadent, if his art can lure his fellows to his song or picture, may prove more ruinous to a people than whole battalions of an Attila or a Changez." The true function of art is vitalisation of life, man, and society. An

artist should be a harbinger of dawn and should better be silent than sing in depressant, dark, dismal, and deadening strains.

افسردہ اگر اس کی نوا سے ہو گلستان
بہتر ہے کہ خاموش رہے مرغ سحر خیز
اگر نوا میں ہے پوشیدہ موت کا پیغام
حرام میری نگاھوں میں نائے و چنگ و رباب
شاعر کی نوا ہو کہ مغنی کا نفس ہو
جس سے چمن افسردہ ہو وہ باد سحر کیا

In describing the decadent artist of this sub-continent, he says:

عشق و مستی کا جنازہ ہے تخیل ان کا
ان کے اندیشۂ تاریک میں قوموں کے مزار
چشم آدم سے چھپاتے ہیں مقامات بلند
کرتے ہیں روح کو خوابیدہ بدن کو بیدار
ہند کے شاعر و صورت گر و افسانہ نویس
آہ بیچاروں کے اعصاب پہ عورت ہے سوار

In *Zabur-i 'Ajam* long poems are written on the music and painting of the slave. In *Asrar-i Khudi*, there is a poem on poetry, thirty lines of which are devoted to decadent poetry. In the same poem there are a few lines in which he gives expression to his idea of a true poet. These lines are:

سینۂ شاعر تجلی زار حسن   خیزد از سینائے او انوار حسن
از نگاه وهش خوب گردد خوب تر   فطرت از افسون او محبوب تر
ازدلش بلبل نوا آموخت است   غازه اش رخسار گل افروخت است
سوز او اندر دل پروانه ها   عشق را رنگیں ازو افسانه ها
بحر و بر پوشیده در آب و گلش   صد جهان تازه مضمر در دلش

در دماغش نارمیده لاله ها   ناشنیده نغمه ها هم ناله ها
فکر او با ماه و انجم هم نشیں   زشت را نا آشنا خوب آفریں
خضر و در ظلمات او آب حیات   زنده تر از آب چشمش کائنات

In the Foreword to *Muraqqa-i Chughtai*, he writes, "The artist who is a blessing to mankind... is an associate of God... he sees all nature full, large, and abundant as opposed to him who sees all thinner, smaller, emptier than they actually are." Iqbal actually subordinates poetry to morality and makes it "subservient to life and personality." According to him, "Resistance of what *is* with a view to creating what *ought to be* is health and life; all else is decay and death." The artist must discover the *ought* within the depths of his own being. True artist is one who aims at the human assimilation of divine attributes and gives men infinite aspiration.

So far I have spoken of Iqbal's functionalism. But this makes only one side of Iqbal's theory of art. There is another equally important side of it and that is his expressionism.

In the history of aesthetics the first great expressionist was Plotinus. According to him, beauty of a piece of art comes not from the material—sounds, colours, tones, or stones—but from the form which operates in the mind of the artist. This form the artist confers upon the material from his own inner resources. This doctrine suffers from the defect that it splits up a work of art into separate

entities, material and form, making material external and form internal to the artist.

The most thoroughgoing expressionist is, however, one of Iqbal's own contemporaries, Croce—the most famous Italian philosopher of recent times whose theory of art has had great influence in the West since the beginning of the second decade of this century. Briefly stated his theory is this:

Art is a creative activity which has no purpose and serves no end. No criteria of utility, ethics, and logic apply to it. It is just the outpouring of the artist's emotions in the form of an image, vision or intuition. In the intuition, form and content are indivisibly united. It yields direct knowledge of concrete individualities, whereas the intellect which is a post-intuitional analytical activity yields reflective knowledge. In other words, logical activity merely analyses what is already given as intuitional knowledge. Intuition is the self-expression of the experiencing individual. There is only one quality common to all the intuitions and that is the creative activity of self-expression. If a work of art is appreciated by a contemplator, it is so because it arouses in him the same intuition as belongs to the artist, and that is so because both are kindred spirits.

Now evidently there are four main parts of this theory: (1) that art is an activity, completely autonomous, and free from all considerations of

ethics; (2) that this activity is distinct from the activity of the intellect; (3) that it consists in the unfolding of the artist's personality; and (4) that appreciation is the contemplator's re-living of the artist's experiences.

Out of these four parts of the doctrine, Iqbal is strongly opposed to the first, for he makes art strictly subordinate to morality, but he endorses the second part in so far as it entails the view that the work of the intellect is dissectional; it grasps reality only piecemeal, while intuition grasps it in its wholeness.[1] But he agrees with Bergson rather than Croce in taking intuition as a higher form of the intellect[2]—as something succeeding rather than preceding thought. It seems to me that actually both parts are right. There is a kind of intuition which precedes thought, and there is another kind which succeeds it.

Regarding the remaining two parts, he is in entire agreement with Croce. He agrees that art is the self-expression of the artist. He expounds this view when, with special reference to the Taj, he sings in praise of the architects belonging to a free people:

خویش را از خود برون آورده اند　　این چنین خود را تماشه کرده اند
نقش سوئے نقش گر مے آورد　　از ضمیر او خبر مے آورد
عشق مردان سر خود را گفته است　　سنگ را با نوک مژگان سفته است

1. ***Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam***, p. 2.
2. Ibid.

and when he addresses his own poetry in these words:

ہے گلہ مجھ کو تری لذت پیدائی کا
تو ہوا فاش تو ہیں اب میرے اسرار بھی فاش

By *Asrar* he does not mean mere intellectual ideas or the forms of Plotinus but fiery thought surcharged with emotion and capable of shaking men and nations.

نغمہ مے باید جنوں پروردۂ آتشے در خون دل حل کردۂ
آیا کہاں سے نالۂ نے میں سرور مے
اصل اس کی نے نواز کا دل ہے نہ چوب نے
عشق اگر سوزے ندارد حکمت است
شعر مے گردد چو سوز از دل گرفت

Again, he agrees with Croce that appreciation is possible because, broadly speaking, all of us have the same emotions as the artist.

نوائے او بہ ہر دل سازگار است
کہ در ہر سینہ قاشے از دل اوست

This, in brief, is Iqbal's expressionistic position.

Now we have noticed that, on one side, Iqbal makes art subservient to morality. On the other side, he regards it self-expression of the artist. As subservient to morality, nothing is to be considered true art, however expressive of the artist's personality, if it does not effect discernment of values and does not create new hopes and new yearnings and aspirations for the advancement of life, man, and society. On the other hand, every work which expresses the personality of the artist, whatever the

contents of that personality—morally good, bad or in different – is a true work of art. Take these few lines of Ghalib:

رگ سنگ سے ٹپکتا وہ لہو کہ پھر نہ تھمتا
جسے غم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اگر شرار ہوتا
زندگی اپنی جو اس شکل سے گذری غالب
ہم بھی کیا یاد کریں گے کہ خدا رکھتے تھے
کیوں گردش مدام سے گھبرا نہ جائے دل
انسان ہوں پیالہ و ساغر نہیں ہوں میں
ہستی کے تم فریب میں مت آئیو اسد
عالم تمام حلقۂ دام خیال ہے

These lines are not poetic from the point of view of Iqbal's vitalistic functionalism, but are superb poetry from the point of view of his expressionism as a theory of art.

There are some admirers of Iqbal who hold that he has said the last word on all philosophical problems. These enthusiasts misunderstand Iqbal and do a great disservice to him by discouraging a frank examination of his doctrines. His philosophy would be utterly false if his system created a dead stop in thought. He rightly emphasises that life is dynamic and so is human thought, and there are infinite possibilities in the womb of the future in either sphere. In either sphere Iqbal's services are immeasurable, and yet he has left a great deal for his successors to achieve. The conflict in his thought to which I have just referred has to be resolved and, as a humble

disciple of his, I regard it as my duty to offer a solution. I think nobody would doubt the highly poetic nature of Ghalib's lines quoted above, although functionally judged they can be hardly said to be so. Iqbal's expressionism, as a theory of art, however incomplete, must be accepted as a basis, and his functionalism, which now stands apart, must be subsumed under it to give his system a unity. Purpose, which now lies outside, must be brought within the sphere of expression. Expressionism cannot find a place in functionalism; let his functionalism be brought under his expressionism. There is one form of purpose which can in no case fall within the activity of art and that is conscious purpose like money-making or making a living by book-making or racing or a game of cards or even by a poetic competition. This is a purpose completely outside art.

But there are two forms of purpose which fall within the activity of art. These are, first, cosmic purpose of which the agent is unconscious, e.g. preparation for reproduction in a doll's marriage in the play of girls, and, secondly, cosmic purpose as a part of the content of intuition of which the agent is conscious. The unconscious cosmic purpose which art serves is training for life by a spontaneous pursuit of it on the plane of imagination, and increase of life by affording relief by the release of pent-up emotions or by the overflow

of energies within the artist's personality. Purpose in this sense is biological. The artist himself is not conscious of it.

There is, however, another form of purpose of which the artist is fully aware. It is the cosmic purpose as an objective ingredient in his intuition of the universe as a whole. His all-embracing intuition contains within itself the idea of this cosmic purpose as a content and, therefore, it falls within its expression. Being an essential part of this expression, it does not collide with it. The idea of the highest good which pervades through the dialogues of Plato or the whole poetry of Iqbal is not external, but internal to their art. Art can be allowed to be didactic only in this sense. Only when the artist's personality is wholly dominated and coloured by an ethical conception of such vast magnitude, can purpose become internal to his spontaneous intuitions. If the art is conceived as expression of the artist's impressions of reality, then purpose may or may not form a part of the artist's intuitions, and whether it does or does not, his work can yet be beautiful. And that is why some verses of Mir, Ghalib, and Fani possess supreme beauty, even though they are pessimistic and non-didactic. After the suggested modification both works embodying a purpose and those without any purpose can find a place in true art, and all kinds of experiences and ideals can fall within its ambit. Some such modification in Iqbal's

of art is essential to make it self-consistent and comprehensive enough to cover all types of art.

Iqbal put us on the right path to the highest reaches of life and thought. He took us a long way on that path under his own leadership. Then he left us saying: Do not halt; go on. You will reach many stages. Do not stop at any of them, taking it to be the last. Work your way up and up to greater and yet greater heights. There will be no limit to your achievements, provided you persevere. This is what he said in effect and his voice still rings in our ears. Let each of us heard his advice and go on persevering in search of life and truth unflinchingly, and improve our thoughts as well as our deeds unceasingly. May God help us!

Index

E

F

G

H

W

Y

Z